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Madison

A brief history of
German literature.

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**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF GERMAN LITERATURE**

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
GERMAN LITERATURE

Based on Gotthold Klee's
"Grundzüge der deutschen Literaturgeschichte"

BY
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College of P. C.

TO
MY SISTER
L. P. C.

10/18/32

PREFACE

THE following account of German literature is based on Gotthold Klee's *Grundzüge der deutschen Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin, 10th Edition, 1908, and 11th Edition, 1909). Both in its general outline of the subject and in its treatment of authors and periods, it is essentially the embodiment of an attempt to reproduce Professor Klee's manual for the benefit of English readers. At the same time, however, it has been my desire and aim to prepare a book which would be suited to the needs of the English reader and student, rather than to offer a faithful translation of the *Grundzüge*, the purpose of which is to satisfy the demands of German students. With this end in view, I have omitted and added passages, and made other alterations wherever they seemed desirable. The most radical of these changes are the following: The division of the subject into chapters instead of into paragraphs, the Introduction, the account of the *Nibelungenlied* and of *Gudrun*, the beginning of Chapter X, the treatment of the Storm and Stress in Chapters XI and XIV, the discussion of Klopstock's *Messias*, of Lessing's *Laokoon* and his dramas, of Goethe's *Iphigenie* and *Wahlverwandtschaften*, and of Schiller's *Braut von Messina*, the general treatment of Heinrich von Kleist and Heine, the introduction of Chapter XX, the discussion of "Young Germany" and the political poets of the forties, of Hebbel's dramas, and, lastly, the beginning of Chapters XXII and XXIII. I have also sought to enhance the usefulness of the book by the insertion of a map of Germany and by the enlargement

of the index, and I have added in footnotes a translation of titles wherever the meaning has not seemed quite apparent.

The faults of the following pages are my own. The merits are due to Professor Klee, above all others. For new points of criticism and for translations of titles, I am under obligation to various English and American critics, but in these as well as in all the other phases of my work I am much more deeply indebted to the unfailing counsel and wisdom of my colleagues Professors Max F. Blau, J. Preston Hoskins, Charles G. Osgood, and Harvey W. Thayer.

GEO. M. PRIEST.

PRINCETON, N. J.,
August 25, 1909.

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**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF GERMAN LITERATURE**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GERMAN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

THE Germans of to-day trace their origin back to the great family of nations known as the Indo-Germanic.

The Origin of the Germans. When and how this family arose is unknown, but according to most scholars it lived first in central Asia, and various members of it migrated thence at some uncertain time to the south-east, south, and west. Among those who went west were the Celts, who took possession of middle and western Europe, and the Germanic tribes, who settled in the northern and north-central parts of the same continent. On the east, beyond the river Vistula, the permanent neighbors of these tribes were the Slavs and Lithuanians, whose language is closely related to the Germanic languages. The boundary line between the Germanic tribes and the Celts is uncertain. In the third century B. C. it was probably formed by two rivers, the Weser on the west and the Main on the south; but as early as the time of Julius Cæsar various tribes had advanced to the Rhine and the Danube, and they later succeeded in establishing themselves in the country beyond these streams, thereby striking boundaries which are practically those of Germany as it is to-day. Some of the Germanic tribes found permanent homes elsewhere, notably the Angles and some of the Saxons, who pushed on farther to what is now England. Most of the Germanic tribes, however, remained on the continent within the

boundaries specified, the Baltic Sea forming the northern, and the country just beyond the river Ems the north-western border. These tribes were the forefathers of the modern Germans.

All the Germanic tribes spoke the same tongue originally, but discrepancies arose very soon between the languages of various districts, and distinctions between three groups of languages must have been established by a time soon after the beginning of the Christian era. These groups are known as the East Germanic (Gothic), North Germanic (Scandinavian), and West Germanic (primitive German, English, Dutch, and other languages). By the eighth century primitive German had split up into numerous dialects, but the main differences in this case were those between the languages of north and of south Germany. Hence these dialects are easily grouped in two main divisions: High German and Low German, or the language of mountainous central and southern Germany, and that of the low land of the north. In the course of time High German became dominant over the whole country, and it is chiefly this language and its literary documents that are known to-day as German and German literature. In the following pages we shall refer to only a few works in Low German.

Histories of the German language distinguish between three great eras known as the Old High, Middle High, and New High German periods, in accordance with the development of certain phonetic changes in the language. The history of German literature follows these divisions of High German, as conspicuous stages in the literary development of the German people coincide largely with these eras. In this way, and by reference to various historical events which left an impress on German literature, we can arrive at the following survey and division of our subject:

The Rise of
the German
Language.

The Main
Divisions of
German
Literature.

A. Old High German Period: From the Earliest German Literature to the Beginning of the Crusades. Pagan Poetry. Christian Poetry and Prose. To about 1100. (Chapter II.)

B. Middle High German Period: From the Beginning of the Crusades to the Reformation. About 1100–1500. (Chapters III–VII.) 1. The Golden Age of Middle High German Poetry in the Time of the Crusades. The Poetry of Knighthood. About 1100–1300. (Chapters III–VI.) 2. The Decline of Poetry at the End of the Middle Ages and the Period of Transition to Modern Times. Literature of the Middle Classes. About 1300–1500. (Chapter VII.)

C. New High German Period: From the Reformation to the Present. From 1500. (Chapters VIII–XXIII.) 1. The Literature of Humanism and the Reformation, from Luther to the Appearance of Opitz. About 1500–1624. (Chapter VIII.) 2. The Writings of the Pseudo-Classicists and the Forerunners of National Poetry, from Opitz to the Appearance of Klopstock. 1624–1748. (Chapters IX–X.) 3. The Great Century of German Literature. The Classical Period and the Age of Romanticism. 1748–1848. (Chapters XI–XX.) 4. Modern Literature to the Present. Struggle for New Ideals. Since 1848. (Chapters XXI–XXIII.)

These are the general lines of division which have been followed in the present discussion of German literature. But before taking up the main subject it will be well to review the indications of literary activity in Germany before the beginning of the Old High German period.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST TRACES OF GERMANIC LITERATURE

FROM statements made by various authors of nations other than Germanic, and from conclusions based on existing Germanic literature, it is certain that Germanic tribes were expressing ideas in poetic form at least as early as the first century A. D.

The First
Indications
of Germanic
Literature.

One of the earliest statements is that of the Latin historian Tacitus, who told in his *Germania*, in the year 98, all that he could learn about Germany and its people.

Tacitus.

He says concerning their poetry: "In their ancient songs, which are their only records or annals, they celebrate the god Tuisto, sprung from the earth, and his son Mannus, as the fathers and founders of their race," and: "They have likewise the tradition of a Hercules of their country, who is Donar, or Thor, the god of thunder, whose praises they sing before those of all other heroes as they advance to battle." They also had, according to the testimony of the same author, a loud battle-cry or hymn called *barditus* which they sang with their shields before their mouths in order to increase the volume of the sound. In his *Annals*, written about 116 A. D., Tacitus pays a tribute to Arminius or Hermann, a prince of the Germanic Cheruscan tribe, who stayed the advance of Roman aggression by the slaughter of Varus and his legions in the Teutoburg forest, not far from Minden, in 9 A. D. He says: "Hermann was, in real truth, the Liberator of Germany. His name still lives in the songs of the barbarians."

These songs were sung in chorus, like a hymn, and on many occasions: at ceremonies connected with religious

customs, at the beginning of a battle, at the celebration of victory and of spring, and at great family rites such

The Character of Germanic Poetry.

as marriage and burial. They contained epic and lyrical elements and even the beginnings of simple dramatic recital. There were also

songs which a single minstrel might offer with harp accompaniment at public gatherings, or at some prince's court, or which a priest sang at religious ceremonies, and songs of praise and ridicule, love messages, charms, and riddles. Even solemn legal proceedings were not without poetry; oaths, bans, and judicial decisions were expressed in poetic form. This form was the old Germanic hemistich or half-line, with two stresses and an indefinite number of

Its Form.

unstressed syllables. A line was often formed by the combination of two half-lines, in which case the whole was more firmly welded together by means of alliteration, that is, by the repetition of an initial consonant or group of consonants, in two or more stressed syllables; the different vowels, however, were allowed to stand in alliteration with each other. For example, we may take a line from an Old High German poem, the *Hildebrandslied* :

Hildibrant enti Hadubrant untar heriun tuem.¹

Strophes were undoubtedly known in the form of a group of hemistichs or of whole lines. The style of Germanic poetry was largely determined by its strict alliteration and was highly developed, as the oldest German poems show.

All Germanic poetry was handed down by word of mouth. The Runic or "secret" alphabet was used only

The Runic and German Alphabets.

in carving symbols on wooden staves or bits of treebark, which were not intended for permanent preservation; and it was probably not until the fifth century that this alphabet was employed for

¹ *The Lay of Hildebrand:*

"Hildebrand and Hadubrand 'twixt two mighty hosts."

inscriptions on metal. When the Germans really began to write, that is, to draw or paint alphabetic symbols on parchment, they used the Roman letters, and retained only a few Runic signs for sounds that were exclusively Germanic. The Goths of the fourth century were the first of the Germanic tribes to learn to read and write.

Wulfila was the teacher of these Goths and the author of the oldest extant monument of Germanic literature.

Wulfila
(ca. 311-83). He was born about 311 in what was then the home of the West Goths, the country north of the lower Danube. His parents were Christians, and as a youth he studied Greek and Latin in preparation for the priesthood. Consecrated as a bishop of the Arian faith, in 341, he spent his life preaching and spreading the Gospel among his people, and died in Constantinople during a Synod in 383. Wulfila's influence on all the Goths survived him by centuries, not in his preaching alone, but mainly in the greatest bequest he could leave his followers, a *Translation of the Bible* in Gothic; this work became the basis of the conversion of all the Germanic tribes who embraced Arianism. Wulfila had to invent the Gothic alphabet in order to make his translation possible, using for the purpose Greek and Latin letters and some Runic symbols. But he accomplished his work with remarkable success. He renders the Greek original accurately, and yet with force and skill. Judging by the language in this work, the speech of the early Germanic tribes must have possessed great dignity and melodiousness. Of Wulfila's translation there remain to-day only the greater part of the New Testament and a few fragments of the Old, preserved chiefly in the Silver Codex at Upsala, Sweden.

As is the case with all peoples, the oldest products of the imagination among the Germanic tribes were mythological. That sagas about the gods existed among the tribes

occupying modern Germany is attested by statements of various Latin authors, by accounts written by churchmen in the early Middle Ages, and by a few charms, ordinances, and the like; but these traces are much more rare in the records of the tribes in Germany than in those of tribes farther north, especially in Scandinavia, because the more southern people were much sooner converted to Christianity. In early German literature almost every indication of the Germanic belief in the gods has vanished. Heroic sagas, on the other

Sagas about
the Gods.

hand, lived in manifold variety in the old Germanic epic. They are an outgrowth of myth-lore only in part; for example, Siegfried and his enemy Hagen, a demon of darkness, are taken from Low Frankish, or north German myths, and Ortnit from a Vandalic; Brunnhild and Hilda, the mother of Gudrun, were originally Valkyrs, or goddesses of war, of Low Frankish and Norse origin; and Wieland the smith was a popular elfish creature, whose fame arose in the country of the Saxons, in the low land of north Germany. Among the historical figures in the heroic saga are Theodoric, Gundahari, Attila, Ermanarich, and many others who were leaders in the time of the migrations of various Germanic tribes between 374 and 568. These two centuries indeed form the heroic age of the German people; this age gave birth to their heroic sagas, and informed them with its titanic spirit.

The main events which the sagas celebrate can be briefly summarized and grouped together:

The His-
torical Back-
ground of the
Heroic Sagas.

1. About 374 the extensive kingdom of the East Goths, now a part of southern Russia, was invaded by the Huns, a Mongolian race, and the aged Gothic king Ermanarich, of the house of the Amals, killed himself in his despair of an honorable issue in the struggle.

The East
Goth Er-
manarich.

2. Forty years later the Burgundians, also a Germanic tribe, as were the Goths, established a kingdom in the neighborhood of Worms on the Rhine, which proved to be a constant menace to Gaul, the most important of Rome's possessions in western Europe. When the Burgundian king Gundahari began his attacks on Gaul, the Roman general Aëtius prepared to crush him by means of Hunnish mercenaries, and Gundahari fell in 437 with the flower of his people.

The Burgundians.
Gundahari.

3. A few years earlier Attila had become king over the vast country of the Huns, stretching from the river Volga to central Germany. Many Slavonic and Germanic tribes were subject to him, among the latter especially the East Goths, whose king, the Amal Theodemer, lived at Attila's court. Rome and Constantinople, which were in constant fear of the Hunnish king, breathed anew when the tidings of Attila's sudden death reached them. He died in 453, in the night after his marriage to the Germanic princess Hilda. In the very next year the subject Germanic tribes threw off the yoke of the Huns, and shattered Attila's kingdom.

4. In 476 Odoacer, the leader of wandering Germanic tribes in Italy, established himself in Rome, after putting aside the last of the Roman emperors. But Theodoric, the son of Theodemer, and his East Goths fell upon him, and, after defeating him at Verona, they at last killed him in 493, at the conclusion of a long siege of Ravenna.

The East Goth Theodoric.

5. Forty years later another Theodoric, son of the Frankish king Clovis, destroyed the prosperous kingdom of Thuringia in central Germany, at that time ruled over by Irmenfried.

The Frank Theodoric.

Irmenfried.

6. Lastly, Alboin, the king of the Lombards, made a home for his people in northern Italy in 568, after they had wandered thus far from the lower Elbe. One of their most important rulers was Authari, who wooed the Bavarian princess Theudelinda in 588.

The Lombards.

Authari.

The Distortion of History in the Sagas.

As the only form of tradition known among the Germanic tribes was oral, events and persons such as those just mentioned were soon distorted and shifted in the popular memory; men who were separated by decades and centuries became contemporaries. In the saga, Ermanarich became the uncle of the East Goth Theodoric, who lived, according to history, more than a hundred years later, and in late versions Ermanarich even took the place of Odoacer. The *Nibelungenlied*¹ also illustrates this popular distortion of history; here Gundahari is called Gunther, Attila Etzel, Hilda Kriemhild, the Amal Theodoric, the victor at Verona, is known as the Amelung Dietrich of Bern, and Irmenfried as Irnfried, and all are presented as contemporaries of each other. The saga of Hugdietrich and Wolfdietrich kept the memory of the Frank Theodoric and his son Theodebert alive. Although the name of Alboin soon vanished, in spite of his fame among the Bavarians and Saxons, the knightly suitor Authari lived on in the saga of King Rother, really the name of Authari's successor Rothari who lived about fifty years later.

As the heroes of the sagas came into contact with each other, their adventures, or those afterward attributed to them, increased in number, and thus a saga cycle arose about a hero or a family. Sagas were also carried by the minstrels from one tribe to another, and enlarged by new suggestions, sometimes of a mythical character. Taking them up according to the

The Growth of Saga Cycles.

¹ *The Lay of the Nibelungs.*

tribes who originated or first developed them it is possible to distinguish two large and six small saga cycles:

1. The East Gothic cycle, or Amelung saga. It arose from the combination of the older Ermanarich and the younger Dietrich (the Amal Theodoric) sagas, and was later increased by the addition of the Etzel (Attila) saga in the conception of the East Goths, that is, favorable to Etzel.

2. The Burgundian-Low Frankish cycle, or Nibelung saga. This, too, was the result of a combination of sagas, the Burgundian treating Gunther, Kriemhild, and Etzel, the conception of the latter being west German and unfavorable, and the Low Frankish saga concerning Siegfried, Brunnhild, and the Nibelungs. This cycle was afterward united in Germany with the Amelung saga, and adopted the latter's favorable conception of Etzel.

Less extensive sagas are the following:

3. The Alemannic, or south German, saga of Walther of Aquitaine, a province in south-western France.

4. The Hegeling saga, a union of the Norse and Low Frankish saga of Hilda and the Frisian Gudrun saga.

5. The Vandalic Hertnid, or Ortnit saga, which was later increased by the addition of

6. The East Frankish Hugdietrich and Wolddietrich saga.

7. The Bavarian-Lombard saga of Authari or Rother, and

8. The Low Saxon Wieland saga.

All these sagas we shall find recurring in one form or another in German literature.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD HIGH GERMAN PERIOD. TO 1100

THE oldest extant manuscripts of German literature date from the second half of the eighth century, and are written in the language of that time. But the contents of a few fragments are distinctly pagan in character, and must have been composed some time earlier, before the rise of the house of Charlemagne. These works are therefore often designated as pre-Christian or pre-Carolingian. The other works of the Old High German period may be divided into two groups: those of the time of Charlemagne and his dynasty, that is, about 750–900, when there was remarkable literary activity among the Germans; and those of the time of the Saxon and Franconian emperors, about 900–1100, two centuries of nearly complete stagnation in literature written in German. Apart from three Latin poems to be mentioned, almost all the notable literary productions by Germans down to 1100 were written in High German; only one in pure Low German demands our notice. The language of all the German literary remains is marked, like the Gothic of Wulfila, by unusual vigor and sonority.

The oldest composition in the German language which can make any claim to the title of literature consists of two charms now called the *Merseburger Zaubersprüche*,¹ from the name of the town where they were discovered and are still preserved. The manuscript containing them was not written until the tenth century, but the contents of the charms show at once that

Subdivisions
of the Old
High German
Period.

The Lan-
guage.

Pre-Carolin-
gian Poetry.

¹ *Merseburg Charms.*

they arose in pagan, pre-Carolingian times; and their form, first a brief exposition and then the incantation, is quite as old as the contents. The first charm, of four alliterative lines, describes the Valkyrs, with whose help a prisoner of war is to break his fetters. The second, a charm of eight alliterative lines, introduces a number of Germanic gods and goddesses, among them Wodan and Freya, who are to assist in healing a lame horse. There were countless charms like these, many of which have been handed down in Old High German, and in the Old Saxon, or Low German dialect, but the others were evidently remoulded under Christian influence. Many are still current to-day.

Of all the popular epic poetry which arose with the heroic saga, about the end of the migration of the races, that is, about 600, the Germans possess now only a single example, the *Hildebrandslied*,¹ a fragment of only sixty-eight alliterative lines, and in a version written about two centuries later. It is a masterpiece in the portrayal of emotions as well as in its heroic spirit; it suggests what a great treasure was lost when the songs of the old heroes disappeared. Two monks in Fulda wrote it from their faulty memories some time after 800, on the cover of a theological manuscript. The word-forms are a strange mixture of Old Saxon and Old High German. The story is an episode of the East Gothic saga cycle, and tells that at the appearance of Odoacer, Theodoric with Hildebrand and other heroes fled eastward to the Huns. Thirty years later he returns, but his enemy meets him with an army, and a battle ensues. In the course of it Hildebrand comes face to face with his son Hadubrand, whom he had left behind as a child, and who is now on the side of the enemy. In reply to Hildebrand's question Hadubrand gives his name; his father, he says,

¹ *The Lay of Hildebrand.*

fled with Theodoric, and has since surely died. Hildebrand tells his son who he is, but Hadubrand does not believe him, and insists upon fighting. The father now bewails his fate: thirty years he has been far from home, victorious in all his battles, and now he or his child must be slain by the other's hand! The unavoidable combat begins. How it ended we do not learn, as there was not room for it on the cover of the book the monks used. But the solemn tone of the poem and other reasons leave no doubt that the son was slain by his father.

Christianity was brought into Germany from the west by numerous missionaries from the British Isles and by the

The Intro-
duction of
Christianity.

Irish Columba (died 615) and Gall (died 627), the founder of the monastery at St. Gall in Switzerland. They were followed by the Anglo-

Saxon Winifred, or Boniface (died 754), who organized the church in Germany and made it dependent upon the pope at Rome. The political power supporting Boniface in his labors was the kingdom of the Franks, then in the hands of the Carolingians. From the time this dynasty began its struggle to unite all the Germanic tribes on the continent

The Carolin-
gians
(ca. 750-900).

under its sway, the Frankish kingdom had been developing into a stronghold of German nationality. The furtherance of this impulse toward

unification and the permanent establishment of Christianity throughout the Frankish kingdom were the work of Charlemagne. He not only forced the last heathen

Charlemagne
(d. 814).

tribe, the Saxons, to acknowledge his supremacy and to accept the Christian faith; he also

strengthened and advanced Latin and German Christian culture in all his realm. The clergy became the leaders of this movement, and in the monastery schools at Fulda and St. Gall the German language was fostered as well as Latin. In 789 Charlemagne issued important regulations concerning preaching and church instruction, in conse-

quence of which the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and forms used at confession and baptism were put into German, as well as the Gospel of Matthew. German homilies translated from the Latin also arose at his prompting, and dictionaries and translations of the church fathers with commentaries. Charlemagne was zealous, too, in the production of a German code of laws; he gave the months and winds German names; and, as his biographer, Einhard (died 840), informs us, he ordered the old German heroic poetry to be written down in order that it might not be forgotten. But Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious (died 840), despised the old heathen poetry, and the clergy inveighed against it. The people continued to sing the songs, but they could not write, and in time all was lost except the *Hildebrandslied*.

Among the literary productions of the Carolingian period, the first in point of time is the *Wessobrunner Gebet*,¹

The "Wessobrunner Gebet"
(ca. 800).

written soon after 800 in the Bavarian dialect, and found in or near the place of its origin, in the monastery at Wessobrunn. In nine allit-

erative lines an epic poet describes the chaos which existed before the creation, when there was only God, "the most generous of men," and with Him many divine spirits. A brief prayer in prose follows, a petition for true faith and

"Muspilli."

strength to withstand the devil. Another allit-

erative poem usually called *Muspilli*, "the destruction of the world," has been handed down in fragmentary form in a manuscript which belonged to Louis the German (died 876). It, too, was written in the Bavarian dialect of the time.

In order to crowd out the pagan heroic poetry, the church was forced to offer some substitute, and chose the Christian epic. Besides various short works, two long ones arose in this way, both on the same exalted theme,

¹ *Wessobrunn Prayer*.

the story of Christ. The *Heliand*,¹ modern German *Heiland*,¹ a poem of almost six thousand alliterative lines,

Christian
Epics.

was written about 830 in the Old Saxon dialect at the instigation of Louis the Pious; its author is unknown, but he was evidently a poet by profession. His sources were Latin prose paraphrases of the story of the Redemption, especially one translated from the Greek of Tatian, but the poet shows considerable imagination of his own, and his style is fresh and popular. With charming artlessness he conceives the action almost as if it were taking place on German soil, and makes the Saviour with His disciples appear like a German prince going forth with his vassals to redeem his people. The poem thus offers a veiled portrait of its time, and certainly no one could have devised a better plan than this conception of Christ as a prince to attract the Saxons and further their real, peaceful conversion.

The *Evangelienbuch*,² which the Rhine-Frankish poet, Otfrid, completed in the monastery at Weissenburg in Alsace, about 868, and which he dedicated to

Otfrid.

Louis the German, may be contrasted with the *Heliand* in various ways. In the first place, the one is in Old Saxon, and the other in Old High German, each one of prime importance in the study of the dialect or language concerned. Furthermore, the style of the *Evangelienbuch* is not that of the popular epic, but didactic and learned, although Otfrid was lacking neither in warmth of feeling nor in patriotic pride. The poetic form has also changed from the old alliterative line to a rimed strophe. Otfrid's effective use of end rime established this artistic device in German, although it had been employed sporadically before his time, and it had been long since known in Latin hymnology. Alliterative verse gradually died out after Otfrid, but alliteration is preserved even to the

¹ *The Saviour.*

² *Book of the Gospels.*

present in numerous familiar combinations, such as **Kind und Kegel** and **Mann und Maus**.¹

Other poets of this time, Christian in training and outlook, sang of the historical deeds of the kings. One of the few extant songs of this kind is the *Ludwigslied*,² written by a Rhine-Frankish monk in the rimed lines of Otfrid. It celebrates the victory of the youthful king of the West Franks, Louis III, over the Normans at Saucourt in 881. The prose literature of the Carolingian age consists of the translations mentioned above which were made for church purposes.

The "Ludwigslied"
(ca. 881).

The Saxon
Emperors
(919-1024).

The Saxon emperors accomplished much for Germany in building up a distinctively German nation, and the ever-closer union with Italy after the coronation of Otto the Great at Rome in 962 was of great moment for German civilization, but neither the consciousness of nationality nor the influx of new ideas from the south advanced German literature. On the contrary, the development of German literature as it had started under the Carolingians halted almost completely under these succeeding rulers. A substitute in the form of Latin poetry occupied the foreground in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The study of the ancients was carried on now both by the clergy and at court, and people in the higher circles neglected and scorned the so-called "peasants' language," that is, German. The monastery schools were above all else centres of Latin culture. St. Gall, however, can boast that German prose also was fostered there, and at least a few of its monks and pupils were at home in the poetic world of the national sagas, although the cultivation of neither poetry nor prose followed the lines of independent creation, but only those of learning. Notker Labeo (died 1022),

The Study
of Latin.

¹ "Chick and child" and "Man and mouse."

² *Lay of Ludwig*.

that is, "the Big-lipped," also called Teutonicus, "the German," was the first to put Latin texts, such as the Psalms and Boëthius's *Consolations of Philosophy*, into real German, instead of merely translating them word for word.

In his Latin work on rhetoric Notker has handed down two rimed strophes by German minstrels, which are the only remains of popular poetry from the tenth century. Although the time had been so unfavorable, this poetry had lived on. The singers who had once been highly honored at the courts of princes now went from village to village as poor wandering minstrels, singing the old songs about Dietrich and Siegfried and other popular heroes, and new songs on various events in history. About 930, a pupil in the monastery school at St. Gall,

Minstrel
Poetry.

Ekkehard the First, rewrote a fragment of this German heroic poetry in the language, metre, and style of Virgil, the *Waltharilied* ¹ (*Waltharii*

The "Waltharilied"
(ca. 930).

poësis), also called *Waltharius manu fortis*.² It tells the story of German songs, which were then extant, with genuine epic detail: how Walther of Aquitaine, a province of the West Goths, carries off his betrothed Hildegund and much rich treasure from the Huns, who have captured and kept them. Before a cave in the Vosges Mountains the lovers halt, and there Walther is forced to defend his treasure in a series of combats with twelve heroes, who have come from Worms on the Rhine under the leadership of their king, Gunther. One of these heroes is Walther's old comrade Hagen, who at first refuses to fight. All the king's other knights have fallen before Hagen consents to attack Walther, and then only in company with Gunther. In the terrible fight which soon begins, they wound each other frightfully, but at last make peace. Hildegund binds up their wounds and brings them wine, and Walther and Ha-

¹ *Lay of Walther.*

² *Walther of the Strong Hand.*

gen renew their comradeship amid wild jests. The reckless defiance characteristic of the heroic age surges to and fro in the epic, but there are moments of exquisite poetry; the variety in the description of individual combats is also singularly artistic. With all its Latin garb the heroic, poetic tone and the national content of the *Waltharilied* make it one of the most valuable remains of old German literature.

The restoration of strict monastic discipline which began in the monastery of Cluny in Burgundy in the tenth century,

Religious and
Secular Life.

and which checked the worldly tendencies of the monkhood, emphasized in Germany as well as elsewhere the antithesis between religious and secular life. This is reflected in the literature, where the monkish renunciation of the world is in striking contrast with the bubbling joy in life among the people at large. The lower classes revelled in the popular rimes of the minstrels, the

Goliard
Poetry.

higher classes in the graceful rollicking Latin songs of men who had been educated in the schools, and who had given up a career in the priesthood, the so-called Goliards or "wandering students." Standing

The Begin-
nings of the
German
Beast Epic.

somewhat apart in the literature of the tenth century is the oldest "beast epic" of the Middle Ages, that is, an epic in which animals act and talk like men. The *Ecbasis Captivi*, or the "Flight of the Captive," was written about 940 by a monk of Toul in Lorraine. It, too, is a Latin poem, in leonine hexameters, that is, an hexameter in which the cæsura and the end of the line rime with each other, for example:

*talibus a culpis facta est expulsio vulpis.*¹

The most important part of the *Ecbasis* is a wolf's account of his reasons for his enmity toward the fox; this hostility

¹ "Crimes like these now telling
expelling."

caused the fox's swift

is the kernel of the beast epic, which was soon to develop very rapidly.

The long and bitter struggle which the Franconian emperors carried on with the church on the one hand and with rebelling nobles on the other, together with the depressing influence of an abnormally strict clergy, arrested the development of German literature in the eleventh century even more than had been the case under the Saxon emperors. The literary remains of the later time are very scanty. The most significant

The Franconian Emperors (1024-1125).

"Ruodlieb"
(ca. 1030).

work is a Latin poem, *Ruodlieb*,¹ in leonine hexameters, and preserved only in part. It was written about 1030 at Tegernsee in Bavaria. *Ruodlieb* is the oldest novel of the Middle Ages; here for the first time an imaginary action is presented with poetic art as a picture of life. The romantic adventures of the hero, partly in the Orient, anticipate by many years much of the poetry of knighthood as it flourished later during the Crusades.

Poetry of the Clergy.

Not until the second half of the eleventh century did the clergy again begin to make more use of the German language. The contents of their writings are religious exclusively. The story of the Redemption was told in choruses which were to be sung on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and the Virgin Mary was often celebrated in poems that charm us still with their beautiful simplicity. Among lives of the saints perhaps the most remarkable is the *Annolied*,² written about 1080; after a sketch of the history of the universe it reaches its climax in a glorification of the city of Cologne

Prose.

and its great bishop Anno (died 1075). German prose was cultivated to some slight extent toward the end of the eleventh century.

¹ Titles of works, when names of characters, are not translated, unless the name has special significance.

² *Lay of Anno*.

CHAPTER III

THE DAWN OF THE MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN PERIOD. 1100-1180

THE Franconian emperors began their struggle with the papacy for the supremacy of the state over the church about 1046. The great strength which the church displayed in this conflict had a quickening effect upon religious life in Germany almost at once, but after the close of the eleventh century zeal for the faith became still more wide-spread and more intense through the influence of the most potent Christian impulse of the Middle Ages, the spirit of the Crusades. In the course of time much worldly passion and rude love of adventure were hidden under the banner of the Cross, but the Crusades were, nevertheless, the expression of an unparalleled religious enthusiasm. The First Crusade started from France in 1096, and Germany, except the country along the Rhine, had no part in it; but in the Second, 1147-49, the German emperor Conrad III stood beside the French king Louis VII at the head of the undertaking. Many thousand French and German nobles with their vassals followed the two monarchs, and thus the energy of the German nobility was turned toward a worthier goal than internecine warfare. The knightly hosts suffered indeed great disasters and failed in their attempt to drive the Turk from the Holy Land, but in other respects the happy results of the Second Crusade, for Germany at least, were extraordinary. The knights, that is, the nobles

Connections
between the
Life and Lit-
erature of
the Middle
High German
Period.

The
Crusades.

and their vassals, had been called forth as the standard-bearers of the paramount issues of the time, and they were now the intellectual equals of the clergy, who had been the exclusive representatives of all higher culture. The Crusade had also brought the Germans into close relations with the French, and started the imitation of French manners and French culture by the German knighthood. The experience of the Germans was further enriched by contact with the Orient, their general knowledge was increased, and new views of life were opened to them. Besides all this, Lothaire the Saxon, who followed the Franconian emperors, had been succeeded in turn by the Hohenstaufens, and under the latter a strong national consciousness arose in Germany. This sense of nationality owed more to Frederick Barbarossa (1152-90) and Frederick II (1215-50) than to any other members of the Hohenstaufen dynasty; both were famous throughout Europe for their deeds of arms and for the intellectual activity and splendor of their courts. Lastly, new struggles between emperor and pope called forth all the mental and physical powers of Germany, and led to an increasing intercourse with Italy. Thus the intellectual life of the nation was quickened by new impulses which came in from all sides. Warring Germany was an appropriate place for militant knights; here they inscribed upon their banners piety, honor, loyalty, courage, good breeding, and the service of noble ladies, and they strove to embody in their own lives the ideals of the age. It is no wonder that the period of the Crusades and the Hohenstaufens became a golden age in German poetry, and that the class which fought out the momentous conflicts of the time also won the lead in the field of poetry.

The Hohen-
staufen
Emperors
(1138-1254).

The first Middle High German literature reminds us often of the late Old High German period, but at the same

time it contains in embryo many elements of the poetry of knighthood. At first most of the epic poets were members of the clergy just as in former times, but wandering minstrels who had grown up in the towns soon began to win recognition from higher circles. The subjects of the secular poets were national, indigenous, and were presented in a popular style. On the other hand, the clerical poets, in order to retain the favor of the public and by preference, introduced secular themes taken from foreign authors. Their works are largely translations of French epics. The verse-form they chose is the riming couplet of lines containing four stresses each, the so-called short couplet. The first pure lyric poetry of knighthood and the first gnomic, or sententious, didactic poetry of the town minstrels were also heard at this time. The structure of the verse is still careless; imperfect rimes and assonance prevail, and good technic is acquired slowly.

The numerous legendary accounts of the deeds of Alexander the Great were known in France first in Latin versions, and there they had found poetic expression in the vernacular before the opening of the Middle High German period. A second-hand version of this kind was the source of the *Alexanderlied*,¹ which was written about 1130 by Lamprecht, a priest of the Middle Rhineland, and which is remarkable as the first German epic with a theme taken from classical antiquity and based on a French model. It was the unoriginal motley content of the poem which attracted Lamprecht's contemporaries, but the German poet shows talent of his own in his vivid descriptions of battles. A large group of sagas glorifying Charlemagne and his paladins had arisen in Germany, but in time they had died out at home and were remem-

The Character of the Literature of 1100-80.

Epics by Clerical Poets.

"Alexanderlied"
(ca. 1130).

¹ *Lay of Alexander.*

bered and preserved only in France. It was, therefore, like the discovery of a new world to the Germans of the twelfth century when the Ratisbon priest Konrad told them a portion of the story of Charlemagne in his *Rolandslied*.¹ Konrad based his epic on the *Chanson de Roland*¹ and wrote it soon after 1130 at the command of the Bavarian Duke Henry the Proud. In the German poem the strong national spirit of the French popular epic is replaced by a more universal Christian spirit, whose heroic and triumphant character expresses itself with vigor and terseness. Here the great emperor is an ideal Christian prince, and Roland an ideal Christian knight. Konrad's poem was received with enthusiasm and became so popular that it was rewritten as late as the thirteenth century, though with various alterations to suit a finer taste. The *Kaiserchronik*,² a history of the universe from the stand-point of a German subject of the Holy Roman Empire, was perhaps also written by Konrad; it tells in its eighteen thousand lines of events as late as 1147, but its history is oddly interwoven with legends and fanciful stories.

The secular poets who wrote epics were mostly minstrels whose chief concern was to satisfy the taste of the people. Although very marked before this time, the popular desire for stories of adventure had grown still greater through contact with the Orient; these minstrels accordingly enlarged the native heroic sagas with startling tales of bold expeditions and rude anecdotes.

The large mass of their verses was intended merely for passing entertainment. The epic *König Rother*,³ the first known offshoot of German heroic poetry after the *Waltharilied*, is far above the average. It was written in Bavaria about 1140 by a min-

"*Rolandslied*"
(ca. 1130).

"*Kaiserchronik*"
(ca. 1150).

Epics by
Minstrels.

"*König Rother*"
(ca. 1140).

¹ *Lay of Roland.*

² *Chronicle of the Emperors.*

³ *King Rother.*

strel from Middle Franconia, or modern central Germany. It tells, according to a saga which was shifted from one Lombard king to another, that Rother sent envoys to Constantinople to sue for the hand of the princess for him; but the ambassadors were thrown into prison, and Rother had to follow after and steal away his intended for himself. Later portions, in which a clever minstrel plays an important part, recount the abduction of the princess from Rother's court and his second expedition after her. The loyalty of German vassal and over-lord is the central theme of the poem. The use of the Orient in *König Rother*

"Herzog
Ernst"
(ca. 1180).

shows the influence of the Crusades, but this is much stronger in *Herzog Ernst*,¹ a Bavarian story in which the rebellion of Ludolf of Bavaria (died 957) against his father the emperor Otto I is confused with that of Duke Ernest of Swabia (died 1030) against his stepfather the emperor Conrad II. In the poem Duke Ernest of Bavaria is banished and journeys to the East, where he and his friend Wetzlar go through the most amazing adventures. On his return Ernest is pardoned by the emperor Otto I. The conflict between filial obedience and the claims of friendship, the kernel of the old story, is not fully developed in the poem as it is later in Uhland's drama, but it raises the whole above merely ephemeral literature. The poem, which has been preserved only in a fragmentary form, seems to have been written originally on the lower Rhine, but the main version now extant was probably completed in Bavaria about 1180 by a Middle Franconian minstrel. The popularity of *Herzog Ernst* is

Beast Epic:
"Reinhart
Fuchs."

shown by numerous revised versions of it in later times; it lives on now in the form of a chap-book. Soon after the composition of *Herzog Ernst* an Alsatian minstrel Heinrich der Glîchezäre,² modern German *Gleisner*,² wrote the first beast epic in

¹ *Duke Ernest.*

² "Henry the Dissembler."

German, *Reinhart Fuchs*;¹ it is based on a French version of the epic, but the story is here and there condensed and elaborated with great freedom. Of this poem, too, there are now only fragments, and a single revised version.

French influence appears later in lyric poetry than in epic. From time immemorial songs had been sung in

Germany which were artless and simple expressions of feeling and not epic in character.

Minnesong, or the love lyric of knighthood, arose as an independent art product about the middle of the twelfth century; its birthplace was Austria, where it was an outgrowth of the old native folk-song. The oldest minne-

Kürenberg. singer known by name is Kürenberg, an Austrian nobleman; his simple terse poems, mostly

in the popular strophe of the *Nibelungenlied*, to be described later, reveal their Austrian nativity in their artless mixture of narrative and subjective emotion, a characteristic of early Austrian poetry. The same is true also of

Dietmar von Aist. most of the poems by Kürenberg's younger countryman Dietmar von Aist; only in a few of

his songs can we trace any French influence. One of Dietmar's poems is the oldest German example of the

The "Tagelied." *Tagelied*, or "morning song," which arose in

Provence and soon became very popular; it is a song of lovers' parting when the watchman's call or the song of the birds heralds the approach of morning, the

The First Gnostic Verse. time of farewell. There is no evidence at all, on the other hand, of foreign influence on German gnostic or didactic verse, which was fostered chiefly by wandering minstrels. The oldest gnostic

poet known to us is the minstrel Hergêr (died about

Hergêr (d. ca. 1180). 1180), often called Spervogel the Elder; his pithy verses are a very striking embodiment

of the strong religious sense of a man who was sorely tried by fate.

¹ *Reynard the Fox*.

In the prose of the time Latin was still the chief medium of expression. Historical writing in Latin prose indeed attained what may be called its prime under the Literature in Latin. inspiration of the brilliant achievements of Frederick Barbarossa. The lyrics of the Goliards reached their climax in the work of a man known as "the Arch-poet."

CHAPTER IV

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD OF MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN LITERATURE. 1180-1300. THE COURT EPIC

THE classical poets of Middle High German literature were mainly from the knighthood; there were few from the clergy or from the townspeople, and there were few wandering minstrels. Of the knightly poets, some were of the higher nobility, even kings, such as the Hohenstaufens Henry VI and Conradin; but the majority were poor vassals, who were forced to remain dependent upon the liberality of princes, as their art could draw remuneration from no other source. Some courts, like that of the Dukes of Austria at Vienna and that of the Landgrave of Thuringia at Eisenach, were famous for their generosity. The dependence of the poets was very harmful in that it cost some their self-respect and forced all the poets to conform, at least in part, to the prevailing fondness for foreign customs and display. Thence sprang the long descriptions of festivals, tourneys, arms, and horses, above all, the intense glorification of love and the exaggerated conception of the service of noble ladies which had little to do with real love. These elements appear most clearly in the epic of knighthood, as the epic poet at court told his story mainly not according to his own free choice but at command of his princely patron.

The epic and lyric, the latter of which here includes gnomic verse, were the only kinds of poetry which were fostered and perfected in classical Middle High German. In the case of the epic two classes are to be distinguished:

1. The court epic, or the epic of knighthood. It borrowed its themes from foreign authors, especially French,

and is thus un-German in content. Intended for courtly hearers or readers, it mixes the foreign and native in conceptions and form.

2. The popular epic, or national heroic poetry. The material of these epics was taken from the native heroic saga and, deferring only to a limited degree to the demands of knightly custom, remained German in character, content, and form.

Knighthood and with it culture advanced to their full bloom preëminently in south Germany, where the political centre of the empire lay; and hence a treatment of the classical literature of the Middle High German period concerns almost exclusively the language of that section. The speech of the common people in the various southern provinces differed, to be sure, so that one can speak of the Swabian and Alemannic, the Bavarian and Austrian dialects; but the higher classes of society, the court world, avoided word-forms that were distinctly dialectal, and there arose thus a universal south German polite language without marked colloquial forms. This polite language was naturally employed by the poets of the time who were members of court circles, and their example was followed more or less closely by those who were not attached to courts. Thus it happens that the native province of a poet can seldom be determined solely from the language of his works. Now and then the influence of foreign culture appears unpleasantly in the strong admixture of French words which were taken up in aristocratic circles along with French manners; this is, however, more true of the west, especially of the Rhine provinces, than of the more remote south-east, particularly Austria. With the tacit adoption of a standard language, more attention was paid to its cultivation and use. Sentence construction grew more finished and less rigid, expression more choice; the careless treatment of

The
Language.

the verse gave place to one that is strictly and richly developed, though it sometimes becomes artificial. The lyric was constructed largely according to French and Provençal models.

The epic poets of noble birth rarely treated native themes, and even then hardly ever without a Latin source.

The Themes
of the Court
Epic.

Many revived Christian legends, many told stories of Charlemagne and his nobles in accordance with the French saga cycle that had been introduced into Germany by Konrad's *Rolandslied*; others treated stories of antiquity and the Orient, which they read in French versions. However, most of the poets, and among these the greatest, took their themes from the oft-told romances of northern France, which had gathered round the figure of King Arthur and which included the Legend of the Holy Grail. Arthur, according to the Celtic

Arthurian
Romances.

saga, was a king of the Britons in Wales during the sixth century, at the time when they courageously defended their nationality against the Angles and Saxons. The stories of his deeds and those of his heroes spread among the related Breton tribes in Brittany, or Bretagne, and they were passed on thence to the neighboring French, who wrote them down in prose. There in northern France, between 1170 and 1190, the extraordinarily prolific and fanciful poet Chrestien de Troyes gathered the Arthurian romances together in several voluminous works and embellished them with figments of his own imagination; these fantastic tales were first taken up by the people in the form which Chrestien gave them. They present Arthur as the ideal king of chivalry, who has gathered the flower of knighthood about him in his royal stronghold Karidol, that is, Carlisle in Cumberland, England, where he and they practise all the knightly virtues. Among the heroes who sit in counsel at Arthur's Round Table, and who go forth again and again in search of adventure, are

Erec, Iwein, Gawain, Lancelot, Perceval, or in German Parzival, and others. The fabulous experiences of these knights, and especially their love adventures, were described and read with never-ending delight. By the time of Chrestien the Legend of the Holy Grail, a saga of uncertain origin, had been connected with the story of Parzival's adventures as a knight of the Round Table. According to the legend the grail is the miraculous vessel made of an emerald stone which was used at the Last Supper and in which Joseph of Arimathæa caught the blood of Christ; it is preserved in a magnificent temple built by the king of the Grail, Titurel, on *Mons Salvationis*, and is guarded by the knights of the Grail, or Templars, who must exercise all the virtues of knight-hood, but especially those of piety and self-denial. Besides this and numerous other stories and legends, the romance of Tristan and Isolde, likewise of Breton origin, is also loosely connected with the saga of King Arthur; its theme is the irresistible and overwhelming power of love. The poems in which Chrestien and other French poets turned these sagas into the glorification of chivalry and of the service of ladyhood, were the most copious sources of the Middle High German court epic. The merit of its authors therefore, even of the most important poets, lies less in their inventiveness than in the artistic form of their poems and in the deeper spiritual meaning which they have imparted to characters and events.

The epic of knighthood came first to central Germany, by way of the lower Rhine. Its creator on German soil was a native of the latter district, Heinrich von Veldeke, an epic and a lyric poet. He began his story of Æneas about 1170, taking a French version of Virgil's epic as his source; but the manuscript of *Eneit* was taken away from Heinrich before he could finish it, and was not restored until about 1183, when he came to the

The Legend
of the Holy
Grail.

Heinrich von
Veldeke.

Thuringian court at Eisenach. There he revised and finished his work some time before 1188 at the instigation of Count Hermann, from 1190 Landgrave, of Thuringia. *Eneit* is written in carefully rimed short couplets, and is the first German treatment of an antique theme in the spirit of knighthood. But this mediæval spirit often clothes the heroic characters of Virgil in a humorously inapposite garb; Heinrich's Æneas is a model of courtly, knightly manners, and Lavinia's mother gives her minute and distinctly mediæval instruction about the nature of love, for love plays here a conspicuous part. Nevertheless the poem marks a significant advance beyond the narrative art of older German story-tellers. It became a model for other poets at once, not only on account of its pure rimes and comprehensive descriptions of chivalrous love and knightly combats, but rather more because it was an attempt to write a long story closely and logically constructed, and to portray characters who were psychologically true and intelligible. However much Heinrich was surpassed by Wolfram von Eschenbach and Gottfried von Strassburg, both these later epic poets acknowledged him as the pathfinder of their art, who, as Gottfried says, "grafted the first twig on German poetry from which grew branches and blossoms of later times." At the same time that Heinrich was recreating a story of the ancients, Eilhart von Oberg

Eilhart von Oberg. was revealing the vast wealth of Breton love romances by turning a French poem on Tristan and Isolde into German verse. Eilhart, a Low Saxon from the vicinity of Hildesheim and a vassal of Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, wrote *Tristrant* about 1180 in the language of his native province. His poem, which is more popular and far less courtly than Heinrich's *Eneit*, was soon overshadowed by Gottfried's epic on the same theme, and is preserved only in fragments, later revisions, and in a prose version.

Artistic finish of form is the distinguishing characteristic of the first classic author in this field, Hartmann von Aue (died about 1215), who transplanted the court epic to south Germany. He was a vassal of a Swabian nobleman, Herr von Aue, and took part in a Crusade, probably the one in 1197, for which he wrote several inspiring songs. He was highly educated for his time, as he understood both Latin and French. With his first work, *Erec*, written in 1192 and based on a story by Chrestien de Troyes, he introduced the main body of Arthurian romances into German poetry. The long descriptions in the poem and the superfluous adventures of the hero are very tedious to us now, but the poem has a noble basic idea, the faithfulness of woman. Another chapter in the saga of King Arthur is retold in Hartmann's *Iwein*, also after Chrestien and written about 1200. Although quite dependent upon his model for the contents of his poem, the German is far superior to the Frenchman in tenderness of feeling and in range of thought. *Iwein* is in form Hartmann's most finished work; his style and versification are nowhere else so refined. But the poem lacks an ennobling fundamental theme, especially as compared with *Erec*. The overwrought conceptions of chivalrous love common at the time are well illustrated by the description of the fate of Iwein, who is rejected by his lady because he allowed an adventure to keep him away from her beyond an appointed time; crazed by the blow of her rejection, he suffers agonies before his reason is restored. But even this is not enough; he must now go through severe trials and adventures before he is reunited with her. To Hartmann's contemporaries this was the acme of poetry and perfect poetic justice, but two shorter epics by him make a much stronger appeal to modern sympathies, *Gregorius* and, above all, *Der arme Heinrich*.¹

¹ *Poor Henry*.

The former, another poem after a French source, is a Christian Œdipus legend with a happy ending, and the first Christian legend in German verse by a poet of the knight-hood. *Der arme Heinrich* is a rare exception among the works of the court poets in that its theme is German; it was a tradition in the family of Hartmann's over-lord. With stirring warmth of feeling the poet glorifies the capacity of woman for self-sacrifice and man's power of victory over self; Longfellow has made the story familiar to English readers in his *Golden Legend*. Hartmann's gift as a story-teller, his artistic restraint and clearness, and the finish of his language and verse were admired even in his own day; Gottfried von Strassburg praises especially his "crystalline words." In most of his poetry, which includes a number of charming songs and a *Büchlein*, or poetical love-letter, Hartmann appears as the embodiment of the chivalric idea of "moderation," that is, of propriety according to the court conception of it. In this regard he is the model court epic poet.

The profoundest and most original of all the epic poets of knighthood and the manliest man of them all was Wolfram von Eschenbach. Wolfram was probably born at Eschenbach in Bavaria, some eight and a half miles south-east of Ansbach, about 1170. He grew to manhood poor and without schooling. He was a vassal of the Counts of Wertheim, who had estates in that neighborhood, and after 1203 or 1204 he was often at the court of the Landgrave of Thuringia, where he met the lyric poet Walther von der Vogelweide. In 1217 he returned for the last time to his wife and family, who were then living on Wolfram's fief Wildenberg, now Wehlenberg, a few miles west of Eschenbach. He died about 1220, and was buried in the Church of Our Lady at Eschenbach; his grave was known and cared for as late as the seventeenth century,

Wolfram von
Eschenbach
(ca. 1170-
ca. 1220).
His Life and
Character as
a Man and
Poet.

but to-day the exact spot is a matter of doubt. Proud of his escutcheon, a knight through and through, Wolfram's character was never tarnished by the corrupting excesses of court life, especially by the extravagances of chivalrous love. He was a man of warm and tender feeling, and the peaceful happiness of married life gave him more contentment than court love ever could. He was a man of thoughtful character, and he was, therefore, more mindful of the moral and religious obligations of knighthood than of its pomp and display. His philosophical depth and bold humor, his great power in characterization and in the expression of intense feeling make him the greatest German poet of the Middle Ages. Besides seven poems, five of which are morning songs, Wolfram left two unfinished epics, *Schionatulander*, also called *Titurel*, and *Willehalm*, and one finished epic, *Parzival*. In all three larger works he was far more independent of his French sources than Hartmann, for one reason, because he could neither read nor write. He had the originals read to him section by section, and then dictated his verses. His memory must have been prodigious, as he kept the most intricate plots clearly in mind throughout. Wolfram's style is much less refined than Hartmann's, but it is more original; often as fresh as a folk-song, it lends itself easily to the expression of every mood. It is also rich in figures of speech, although they are now and then very odd and obscure.

Wolfram's chief work is *Parzival*, an epic of nearly twenty-five thousand lines based on a portion of the sagas of King Arthur and the Holy Grail. The two-
"Parzival." fold source was the unfinished *Perceval* of Chrestien de Troyes and a lost poem by a Provençal poet Kyot, who is known only through Wolfram's references to him. The German poem was probably written between 1200 and 1210. *Parzival*, a great-grandson of *Titurel*, is reared by his mother *Herzeloide* in the solitude of a forest,

far from the temptations of knighthood which caused the early death of his father Gachmuret. But one day he meets four knights in glittering armor, and an unconquerable longing for the life of knighthood is awakened in him. His mother reluctantly sees him leave her, and dies of a broken heart. After many adventures Parzival arrives at King Arthur's court, receives instruction in chivalry from the aged knight Gurnemanz, and by his bravery wins the lady Condwiramur as his wife. Later he comes to the castle of the Grail, where he has a chance to release the suffering king of the Grail, Anfortas, from his trouble by asking about the cause of it, but in his simplicity and false understanding of knightly manners Parzival omits the natural question of human sympathy. Thus he forfeits the crown of the Grail, and is unworthy of the Round Table which had received him. Reviling his fate he doubts the goodness of God, and wanders in gloom five long years. At length his soul wins peace through the gentle teachings of the hermit Trevrizent, the brother of Herzeloide and Anfortas. Parzival returns to Arthur purified, is received again at the Round Table, and goes forth once more to the castle of the Grail. Now he asks the question and receives the crown in the place of Anfortas. The poem closes with the reunion of Parzival and Condwiramur; the elder of their two sons, Lohengrin, is to succeed his father as king of the Grail. In the middle of the poem, at the beginning of Parzival's wretched wanderings, Wolfram has inserted a long series of adventures which the Arthurian knight Gawan undertakes, in this way contrasting the spiritual knighthood of Parzival with the worldly knighthood of Gawan. In other places, too, Wolfram has interwoven various new episodes. The central theme of the epic as a whole is expressed at the beginning: doubt and vacillation destroy the peace of the soul, but even through error and delusion a man can attain to perfect happiness, if he

keep a stout heart and recover a joyous confidence in God. This deep thought, the manner in which Wolfram illustrates it by the development of his hero's character, and the lofty spiritual content of the poem raise *Parzival* far above all other poems of knighthood. This basic idea and the impulse to higher spirituality which Wolfram's epic contains are not to be found in the French sources; they were the creation of the German poet.

The Legend of the Holy Grail which Wolfram introduced into Germany in *Parzival* was also the source of the two fragments of the epic *Schionatulander*,
 Wolfram's Other Epics. or *Titurel*, which is written in very skilful strophes. Its subject is the love story, exquisitely told, of Schionatulander and Sigune, a great-granddaughter of Titurel. A later poet wove Wolfram's fragments into a long rambling poem on the Legend of the Holy Grail in general, called *Der jüngere Titurel*;¹ it was for a long time ascribed to Wolfram and for that reason enjoyed a reputation that was wholly undeserved. *Willehalm von Oranse*, Wolfram's other unfinished epic, is based on a French historical saga concerning the sainted Count Willehalm, or William, of Toulouse. Wolfram tells of Willehalm's encounters with the Mohammedans, especially of the celebrated Battle of Aleschans in 793. The poem is distinguished by a masterly characterization of the heroine Gyburg and the herculean squire Rennewart, both of whom are infidels at the beginning of the story. The tolerance with which the poet recognizes the virtues of the unbelievers is very remarkable. To him Christianity is the religion of love and humanity, and he is free from all fanaticism. Admired and praised by his contemporaries Wolfram commanded an almost superstitious veneration even beyond the end of the Middle Ages. Gottfried von Strassburg was the only man who rose in opposition to

¹ *The Later Titurel*.

him and ridiculed his obscure style and the intricacies of his plots.

Gottfried von Strassburg, probably a townsman without rank, who wrote about 1210, was Wolfram's greatest rival.

Gottfried von Strassburg. His only epic poem, *Tristan*, modelled after a French poem by Thomas of Brittany, was un-

finished when he died. It is the story of omnipotent love, of the ruthless adulterous passion of Tristan and Isolde, induced, and therefore mitigated, by a magic potion whose power they did not know when they drank. Gottfried tells the story with thrilling power, his psychological analysis of character and emotion leaves no phase untouched, he manages versification and style with playful ease; in short, he is an artist to a degree of which his predecessor Eilhart von Oberg never dreamed. One must only regret that he was not permitted to end his epic. From the solemn tone of the beginning and from suggestions here and there it is probable that he did not intend merely to glorify unbounded lust, but rather to present an agonizing struggle between unquenchable passion and the dictates of moral law.

Hartmann, Wolfram, and Gottfried were honored by the numerous younger epic poets of the time as the great-

Minor Epic Poets. est masters of their art; others were forced to acknowledge themselves their inferiors.

Stricker, a poet from central Germany, introduced the humorous short story in verse into German literature with his *Pfaffe Amsi*.¹ He was unimportant as an epic poet, but the short story in general became very popular through his influence. The Alemannic knight Rudolf von Ems (died 1254) excelled in beauty of verse-form, which he learned from Gottfried. His stories are too long, but he tells them well. His best are two legends, and of these especially *Der gute Gerhart*, a very thoughtful poem based

¹ *Parson Amsi*.

on a Latin story. Its hero, Gerhart, finds the highest happiness in life in renunciation of self and in activity for others out of pure love of God and man. Rudolf's other noteworthy story is a version of an Oriental legend, *Barlaam und Josaphat*. Throughout his works Rudolf exhibits a charmingly simple, pious view of life. Konrad von Würzburg (died 1287), a thoroughly educated townsman, is also a master of graceful form after the pattern of Gottfried. In his larger poems like *Engelhart*, which was written in praise of true friendship, he often loses himself in useless details, but his shorter stories are admirable, especially a Swabian legend, *Otto mit dem Barte*,¹ in which Konrad humorously portrays a knight's bravery and loyalty to his vassals.

Far from all the imitation and affectation common to court circles stands Wernher der Gartener, a Bavarian wandering minstrel, who wrote the poem *Helmbrecht* about 1250. The story concerns the tragic fate of a peasant's son who thinks himself too good to till the soil, and yields to the example of the robber knights by becoming a robber himself. It is the oldest German village romance. The poem contains wonderfully vivid descriptions of contemporaneous life, which make it especially valuable for the study of German manners and customs in the thirteenth century.

¹ *Otto with the Beard*,

CHAPTER V

THE POPULAR EPIC

THE epic of the people, or the national popular epic which tells of the old Germanic heroes, rose to its noblest expression at the beginning of the thirteenth century, simultaneously therefore with the best court epics. Provinces in the south-east, Austria and Styria, were its original home; there it grew up according to its own nature and inclinations, strong in itself and affected but little by foreign example. The authors of the most important heroic poems were members of the knighthood who observed the taste of their courtly audiences especially in regard to language, but from the beginning their epics remained German in theme, conception, and form. The sources of the popular epic were old ballad-like folk-songs, which have now disappeared entirely, but whose existence is well attested. These songs, which were still sung in the thirteenth century by minstrels of a lower order, treated only single chapters of a saga. As they in all probability often contradicted each other, the authors of the great epics must at times have been obliged to deviate from some of the folk-songs, but they seem to have avoided unnecessary alterations as well as additions of themes which were not based on credible tradition; to these poets the saga was history. Here and there perhaps it is possible to find casual suggestions of the fantastic realm of the Celtic and French sagas and of the Orient, or of the conception of love and knighthood held at court; but, as in the earlier epics of *König Rother* and *Herzog Ernst*, the celebrated Germanic virtues of loyalty and heroism were still the mainsprings of action in the

The Origin,
Themes, and
Form of the
Popular Epic.

lives of the great characters of the saga. These characters were indeed so real and near to mediæval poets, that almost no sense of historical perspective can be found in their poetry. As already suggested in connection with Heinrich von Veldeke's greatest work, customs and people, even those of the most remote age, are treated as contemporaneous with the poets, or as of a time only slightly earlier. The style of the popular epic is simple and concise, and, with the exception of technical words and phrases used in describing court affairs, it is free from strange and unnatural turns of expression. The versification clings to the old rule of a fixed number of stresses and an indefinite number of unstressed syllables; but the number of both tended to become fixed after the example of the court epic. The poets use partly the popular Nibelung strophe and imitations of it, partly the short rimed couplets of the court epic and minstrel poetry, where each line contains four stresses, or, in the case of feminine or two-syllable rime, either three or four stresses. All the heroic epics, strophic or otherwise, were intended to be read aloud, not sung as their sources were.

The epics of this era which now exist in a complete form treat the Amelung, Nibelung, and Hegeling sagas as well as those of Ortnit, Hugdietrich, and Woldietrich, all of which have been outlined in a previous chapter.¹ The combined Amelung and Nibelung sagas found a supreme poetical embodiment in the *Nibelungenlied*,² and after these comes the Hegeling saga in *Gudrun*.

The earliest of the Middle High German national heroic poems, the *Nibelungenlied*,² is at the same time the grandest monument of its kind, the model to a greater or less degree of all its successors. It was written by an unknown knightly poet in Austria about 1200, and has been handed down in numerous copies

The "Nibelungenlied"
(ca. 1200).

¹ Cf. above, p. 10.

² *Lay of the Nibelungs*.

of two distinct versions. In the closing words of the version which in the opinion of scholars reproduces the lost original the more closely, the poem is called *Der Nibelunge Nôt*.¹ In the other version, likewise near the close, the poem is entitled *Der Nibelunge Liet*; this version is an attempt to bring the poem nearer to the standard of the court epic by polishing the old, and by introducing new episodes. The phraseology of the original can not be restored, still less the words of the folk-songs used by the poet. The poem contains nearly ten thousand lines grouped in the so-called Nibelung strophe, the use of which by Kürenberg has already been mentioned. This strophe consists of four lines, each of which is divided by a cæsura, the first half of the line containing four stresses throughout, and the second half three stresses in the first three lines and four in the last one; the rime is masculine, that is, of only one stressed syllable. The style is simple and without many figures of speech, but forcible and sincere.

When the story opens, the heroine of the poem, the beautiful princess Kriemhild, is living at Worms on the Rhine at the court of her brother Gunther, King of the Burgundians. A dream, in which she sees a pet falcon torn to pieces by two eagles, warns her never to love; but Siegfried, a young courageous prince at Xanten in the Netherlands, hears of her beauty and comes to woo her. Gunther consents to the union on condition that Siegfried will assist him as a vassal in winning Brunnhild, Queen of Iceland. Accompanied by his chief vassal Hagen of Tronje, and many others, Gunther sets out, and Brunnhild is won by the aid of Siegfried, who is made invisible by his magic hood. Siegfried then fetches a hoard of gold from the Nibelungs, the children of mist and darkness supposed to be living near

The Story of
the "Nibelungenlied."

¹ *The Woe of the Nibelungs.*

the Rhine, whom Siegfried, the child of light, had conquered at the time, before the opening of the poem, when he slew the dragon. All now return to Worms, where the double marriage is celebrated and a season of happiness begins. Ten years later, Siegfried and Kriemhild come to Worms from Xanten to attend a festival. Brunnhild's jealousy leads to quarrels between the two queens over the rank of their lords, and Hagen promises Brunnhild to avenge her for the insulting words of Kriemhild. He slays Siegfried treacherously on a hunting party by hurling his spear at Siegfried's one vulnerable spot. Kriemhild is crushed by grief; for a long time she refuses to be reconciled even with her brothers, and she lives now only to avenge Siegfried's death. The Nibelung treasure is brought back from Xanten, but Hagen sinks it in the Rhine, as he fears its power in winning friends for Kriemhild. Years pass by, and Kriemhild is sought in marriage by Etzel, that is, Attila, King of the Huns. With the promise of the messenger Rüdiger to avenge whatever wrongs have ever been done to her, Kriemhild gives her consent and journeys down the Danube to her new lord. After thirteen years she and Etzel invite Gunther and his vassals to visit them, an invitation which they accept in spite of Hagen's forebodings and the prophecies of nixies in the Danube, whom they see on the way. When they arrive at Etzel's court Kriemhild demands the Nibelung treasure left to her by Siegfried, but Hagen refuses to disclose its hiding-place, and insolently acknowledges the murder of Siegfried. Kriemhild thereupon incites the Huns to attack the Burgundians, or Nibelungs as they are now called, and the terrible fight begins. Kriemhild vainly offers to save her brothers if they will deliver up Hagen to her, and the frightful slaughter rages for two whole days. At last only Gunther and Hagen are left of the ill-fated Nibelungs; these Dietrich of Bern overcomes and puts in

bonds. Again Hagen will not reveal the hiding-place of the hoard, and Kriemhild orders the head of Gunther to be brought to him as a warning not to persist in concealing the secret. Exultant now that he alone of living men knows the secret of the hoard, and that it will never be revealed, he defies Kriemhild, and she completes her revenge by striking off his head with Siegfried's sword. Dietrich's vassal Hildebrand, unwilling to see the brave Hagen die in this way unavenged, slays Kriemhild.

How much of this is the poet's own, and how much he found in the old heroic songs, can not be determined in detail. The description of Brunnhild suggests an ancient myth concerning a Valkyr who loses her superhuman strength with her virginity; another myth occurs to one in reading the reference to the prophesying nixies in the Danube. Legendary elements in the Siegfried saga are suggested by the accounts of Siegfried's fight with the dragon, his invulnerability, the winning of the Rhine gold, and the magic hood. But the poet of the *Nibelungenlied* knew how to construct a unified whole and infuse new meaning and life into it, and he gave in this way quite as much as he took from his sources. Here and there indeed he has allowed a contradiction in fact to stand as his sources contained it, or he fills in a gap with little success; he also even leaves some obscure passages unexplained, or only half succeeds in clothing semi-pagan ideas and episodes with the knightly Christian garb which he and other mediæval poets like to use. But such minor blemishes are easily overlooked in view of the vivid and essentially harmonious picture presented by his work as a whole. The construction of the poem is so simple and compact that it has often been compared with a drama; indeed when Hebbel wrote his drama *Die Nibelungen*, he followed the course of the action in the poem without any significant changes. The

The Construction and General Character of the Poem.

theme binding the poem together is Kriemhild's love, grief, and revenge. The great moral precept of it, faithfulness, is taught through a variety of forms, the faithfulness of lovers and friends, the faithfulness of vassal and king. The characters, especially those of Kriemhild and her chief enemy Hagen, were wrought by the hand of a great master. With fine restraint and effect they and their emotions are made real and clear, not by objective description, but by their own actions and words. The general tone of the *Nibelungenlied* is, in harmony with the subject, profoundly serious; occasionally it is tender and idyllic. The dominant note is tragic, and this is struck at the beginning and the end: all joy is finally turned to sorrow.

In all the manuscripts of the *Nibelungenlied* there is a kind of sequel called *Die Klage*,¹ by another author.

"Die Klage." It is a poem in short couplets and describes at fatiguing length the obsequies of those killed in the story of the *Nibelungenlied*. The best parts of *Die Klage* are the description of Hildebrand's nephew Wolfhart and the story of the way in which the news of Rüdiger's death was received at his home.

The great model of the *Nibelungenlied* soon aroused emulation, and within a few years, between 1210 and 1220,

some unknown poet of knightly birth in Austria or Styria had written *Gudrun*. The form of verse used in this poem is itself an imitation of the Nibelung strophe; the first half-lines are unchanged, to the second the poet gave feminine rimes, and to the last half-line five stresses instead of four. In the style, too, although this is less popular, the model is unmistakable.

Gudrun is divided into three parts, as the poet begins not only with the story of Gudrun's mother, Hilde, but even with that of her grandfather, Hagen of Ireland. The third part is the story of a Frisian princess Gudrun, who

¹ *The Lament.*

is betrothed to Herwig, a prince of Zealand. She is carried off, however, by another suitor, Hartmut of Normandy, in spite of the attempts of Herwig and her father to rescue her, and as she persists in her refusal to marry Hartmut, is kept a captive and treated with great cruelty at the Norman court. For thirteen years Gudrun suffers, patient and calm throughout; even when forced to wash the clothes of her masters on the sea-shore, barefoot and meanly clad, she preserves her pride and dignity. At last one day, when she is at her task on the shore, an angel in the form of a bird foretells her speedy deliverance, and the next day she sees two men approaching in a boat. They are Herwig and her brother. Joined by Wate and other vassals, they fight with the Normans the following day and win the victory. Gudrun returns in joy to her people, and is united with Herwig.

The first part of the poem, the story of Hagen, is probably a free invention of the poet after the model of the court epics; the other two parts, however, are based on the Hegeling saga, which came from the north, and which the Frisians and Low Franks on the coast of the North Sea transformed from an old myth into a heroic saga. The bird, or angel of prophecy, and the description of Wate at the slaughter of the Normans remind us vividly of the swan virgins and the sea giants of early Germanic myths. The second part of the epic, concerning Hilde, is nearer the original form of the Hegeling saga than either of the other parts; but, as frequently happened with the sagas, the conclusion, which was originally tragic, is here toned down into a happy one, and the story thus loses much of its power. A similar conclusion has already been noted in the story of Gudrun, which is really no more than a richly elaborated repetition of the Hilde story, the chief difference being that Hilde followed her captor willingly. Rhenish minstrels took the stories of

The Story of
"Gudrun."

The Origin of
the Poem.

Gudrun and Hilde, and possibly that of Hagen also, to south Germany about the middle of the eleventh century.

In spite of its long wanderings *Gudrun* preserves the character of its native country, the north German coast, with remarkable fidelity. *Gudrun* is a tale of the sea, of wind and wave and voyages and castles by the sea with their views of passing sails; it offers a striking contrast with the inland scene of the *Nibelungenlied*. On account of the setting and other elements in the two stories, these epics have often been called the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* of German poetry. They are also complements of each other in their happy and tragic terminations, in their sunlight and gloom, in their gentle dignity and pitiless austerity. Gudrun, a heroine even as Kriemhild, is, however, not driven to frightful acts of vengeance which are a denial of her womanly nature. Her heroism is revealed in unabating faithfulness, in proud endurance of suffering, in her indomitable hopefulness, and in her preservation of lofty moral purity in the presence of her tormentors. Her character is one of the noblest and most real in poetry. The poem has come down to us in a very unlucky form; the only extant manuscript of it was not written until the beginning of the sixteenth century, and even this manuscript is not a copy of the original poem, but a reproduction of a version dating from the end of the thirteenth century. *Gudrun* is to be found in the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*,¹ which consists of copies of mediæval heroic epics made at the command of the emperor Maximilian I; the *Heldenbuch* was compiled, and for a long time kept, at the castle Ambras near Innsbruck.

The other popular epics vary considerably in merit. Almost all of them deal with some portion of the saga about

¹ *The Ambras Book of Heroes.*

Its Character
and Pres-
ervation.

Dietrich of "Bern," as the East Goth Theodoric is called in German poetry, in memory of his victory at Verona.

Minor Popular Epics. The best of the minor epics are *Albharts Tod*¹ and *Laurin*. The former, which is written in the strophe of the *Nibelungenlied*, has been very much distorted by the countless interpolations of later revisers; but it contains a stirring portrayal of the heroic young Albhart, who keeps faithful watch in the conflict between Dietrich and Ermanarich, until he is treacherously murdered by Witege, the man he has saved. *Laurin*, an idyllic minstrel composition in rimed couplets, skilfully unites the Dietrich saga with one from the Tyrol concerning the pugnacious dwarf king Laurin and his strictly guarded rose garden. The hero of "Bern" breaks into the garden, overpowers Laurin, and then in turn becomes his captive and is finally rescued by a maiden.

Other phases of the Dietrich saga were often treated until the end of the thirteenth century, but with less force and art. *Das Eckenlied*,² written in a twelve-line strophe called the "Bern tune," fresh and popular in spirit, presents a vivid contrast between the ambitious, valiant young giant Ecke and the modest, deliberate hero Dietrich. *Die Rabenschlacht* tells in six-line strophes of "the Battle of Ravenna" between Ermanarich and Dietrich; it suffers from too great length and clumsy presentation, but the murder of Etzel's two sons and Dietrich's brother at the hand of Witege, and Dietrich's vengeance are described well, although the merit of these passages seems to be due less to the poet than to his source. *Der Rosengarten*³ is a light-hearted minstrel's tale, which is probably not based on an older saga, but is rather an imita-

¹ *Albhart's Death.*

² *The Lay of Ecke.*

³ *The Rose Garden.*

tion of other epics. The form is the so-called "shortened Nibelung strophe"; that is, the last stress is usually missing. The poem has been preserved in five different versions, and tells how Kriemhild invites the heroes of "Bern" to her rose garden in Worms to measure themselves with the champions there. The victor is to receive a kiss and a wreath of roses from her. The visitors are victorious in the twelve contests; even Siegfried succumbs before the might of Dietrich. In this contrast of the two greatest heroes of the popular epic, Siegfried and Dietrich, lies the chief interest of the poem. The figures of Dietrich and the brawny bellicose monk Ilse are the most finished in the poem.

Several epics by minstrels, written in the same shortened form of the Nibelung strophe, stand apart, in content, from the Dietrich saga. In *Ortnit*, an old "Ortnit." saga of Vandalic origin has been interwoven with stories of travel which had been popular since the Crusades: a journey to the Orient in quest of a bride, romantic adventures and fights with the heathen, and the story of a dwarf. An expedition after a bride is also the subject of the pleasing poem of "Hugdietrich" and "Wolfdietrich." *Hugdietrich*. The versions of *Wolfdietrich*, a story of East Frankish origin, as that of the hero's father Hugdietrich, vary greatly; but the central theme of the saga, the glorification of the faithfulness of king and vassal, is not wholly lost even in the maze of constantly increasing adventures.

CHAPTER VI

MINNESONG, DIDACTIC POETRY, AND PROSE

THE major note in all lyric poetry, of whatever age or nation, is love. So, too, in Middle High German, love, or *minne*, as it was then called, is the dominant theme in lyrical verse, and this poetry is therefore not improperly known as *minnesong*.

The Themes
of Minne-
song.

Besides the usual meaning of love, *minne* also contains the idea of "memory, loving mindfulness," affection in the broadest sense, for example, *gotes minne*;¹ but even with this expanded conception of love the whole content of Middle High German lyric poetry is by no means summarized under the title of minnesong. Many other human emotions besides those of love are expressed in it, especially those prompted by the world of nature, the change in the seasons, the joy of summer and the sadness of winter, religious feelings, love of fatherland, political convictions, gratitude to princely patrons, ridicule and jest, the thoughtful contemplation of human life in all its phases, in short, personal experiences of every kind. The range of theme in Middle High German minnesong is one of its striking characteristics, but as we have said, the note of love is the one most often sounded in these as in all lyric poems.

Tacitus tells us that a profound veneration of the divine in woman was inherent in the members of the old Germanic tribes, and the part which women play in the heroic sagas indicates a similar fine moral relation between the sexes. Here men and women are not drawn together merely by physical passion, but

Its Origin.

¹ "love of God."

by a deep and many-sided understanding of each other. Nor does the conception of love as entertained by the best minnesingers differ essentially from the Germanic notion, at least in as far as these poets were not contaminated by foreign customs and literature. But from the end of the twelfth century on, both the corrupt court life of France and the passionate, sensuous poetry of French, and especially of the Provençal troubadours, were often imitated in Germany. The worship and service of a lady, or mistress, usually a married woman of noble birth, became the fashion, and the praises of their ladies were sung by the poets in imitation of their models. Provincial differences are unmistakable in this poetry. The lyrics of the Rhine country and western Germany in general were naturally most influenced by their immediate neighbors; in the north the poets of northern France were the models, in the south the Provençal poets. In Bavaria and Austria the lyric remained truer to its origin, namely, as a natural outgrowth of native popular songs.

The poets, who were for the most part members of the knighthood, were also composers; to each kind of strophe they invented they also created a tune, which was universally recognized as the possession of one man. Whoever used it without authority was dubbed a "tune filcher." The individual strophe, called a *liet*, consisted almost always of three parts like the Romance models and like many modern German hymns, such as *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*.¹ The first two parts are similarly constructed *Stollen*, or groups of two or more lines; these two parts together form the *Aufgesang*, or "opening song," the melody of the first part being repeated with the second. The third part, the *Abgesang*, or "concluding song," is built on different lines from the other parts, and has its own melody. Besides the poems, or

The Verse-
forms of
Minnesong.

¹ "A mighty fortress is our God."

songs, with two similar parts and one dissimilar, there is also the *Leich*, or lay, with a single melody accompanying it throughout; it is modelled after certain Latin church songs called *sequentia*, and consists of dissimilar strophes. A third form of verse in this period is the *Spruch*, or gnostic verse, whose content is reflective, moralistic, religious, satiric, and, from the time of Walther von der Vogelweide, political. Its oldest representative was Herger, who has already been mentioned. Apart from its form, in three parts, it shows no foreign influence. Songs and gnostic verse were often written by the same poet; the greatest song-writer, Walther von der Vogelweide, was also the greatest author of gnostic poetry. Poems by about a hundred and sixty minnesingers have been handed down in manuscript collections; the Weingartener, the Little Heidelberg, and the so-called Manesse, or Large Heidelberg manuscripts, are the most important. The last-named was written about 1300 and is now, together with the second, in Heidelberg. It is the most comprehensive collection, containing about seven thousand strophes by a hundred and forty poets.

The poems of the older Austrian minnesingers, Kürenberg and Dietmar von Aist, were in the main an outgrowth of the native folk-song, as we have seen, but the west German lyric poets like Heinrich von Veldeke and Friedrich von Hausen, and the Thuringian Heinrich von Morungen, the greatest minnesinger before Walther, were deeply affected by Romance poetry. The Alsatian Reinmar von Hagenau made this refined art of the court familiar to the German-speaking south-east, when he settled in Austria toward the end of the twelfth century.

The most intense and most versatile German lyricist before Goethe, the most national German poet of the Middle Ages, was Walther von der Vogelweide (born

The First
Minne-
singers.

about 1165, died about 1230). Walther's origin is a matter of dispute; he may and may not have belonged to a lower order of the knighthood, and he was perhaps, but not certainly, born in Austria. According to his own testimony, he learned his art at the court in Vienna; Duke Frederick (1194-98) was his patron, and Reinmar von Hagenau his first literary model. After Frederick's death the destitute poet began, in the fashion of the wandering singers, a life of roaming which lasted some twenty years. At first he tarried for a time at the court of the Hohenstaufen Philip, third son of Frederick Barbarossa and Duke of Swabia, who was then contending with the Guelph Otto, Duke of Brunswick, for the succession as Emperor of Germany. Walther assisted Philip with several political verses and celebrated Christmas of 1199 with him in Magdeburg. Walther was at the court of Hermann, Landgrave of Thuringia, in Eisenach several times. On the occasion of his visit in 1204 he met Wolfram von Eschenbach. The legend of the minstrels' contest in Hermann's castle, the Wartburg, which Richard Wagner later united with the legend of the poet Tannhäuser in the music drama of that name, sprang from this meeting of the two greatest poets of their time at the court of the art-loving landgrave. How Walther had to struggle for the necessities of life is suggested by a voucher dated 1203, which records that Bishop Wolfger of Passau gave the poet five solidi, that is, about four dollars, for the purchase of a fur coat. Walther found favor for a time also at Meissen in Saxony with Margrave Dietrich, and elsewhere with other princes. After Philip died in 1208, and Otto was generally acknowledged as emperor, Germany hoped for lasting peace. Walther defended Otto's imperial rights against the claims and encroachments of the church in several vigorous poems written in 1212. But Otto soon forfeited the

Walther
von der
Vogelweide
(ca. 1165-
ca. 1230).

sympathy of all his subjects by his stingy, overbearing ways, and when the young Hohenstaufen Frederick II marched on from Italy to take the crown, Walther, too, renounced Otto, and in 1213 joined the adherents of the new emperor. Frederick rewarded his enthusiastic devotion in 1220 by the bestowal of a small fief in Würzburg, which filled the aging poet with jubilant gratitude. Thus at last he saw himself permanently guarded against possible abject want. With all the force and sharpness which the nationalistic Walther used in the defence of the empire against the papacy, he was always a deeply religious soul, and when Pope Gregory IX hurled the ban of excommunication against Frederick in 1227 and forbade the Crusade which Frederick had promised to conduct, Walther showed his piety in arousing enthusiasm for the project by various songs. He probably took part in 1228 in the ardently longed-for "dear journey," and seems to have died in 1229 or 1230 shortly after his return. He was buried in the cloisters of the New Cathedral in Würzburg.

In his poetry Walther united the highly developed art of the knightly singer and the simplicity and freshness of feeling of the popular minstrel. At first indeed as a pupil of Reinmar he made his contribution to the fashionable love lyric, but this was only an episode in his literary career. He sang of all that stirs and ennobles the heart of man. The ecstasies and miseries of love, the gladness of spring and the woe of winter, all find expression, joyful and melancholy in turn; every theme has its own color. All of Walther's lyrics spring from personal experience and from the depths of a passionate, sensitive heart; and the most bitter, most painful feelings pour forth as overpoweringly as the poet's steadfast love of his country and his deep piety. Not less admirable are his gnomic verses in which he, first of all German poets, lays hold upon the larger life of his nation; enthusiastic

His Poetry.

for the glory of the empire he fights with cutting ridicule and annihilating wrath. He is the greatest German patriotic poet. In his calmer, more reflective gnomic verse he attacks the low and impure, and teaches virtue and wisdom. Even minor events in his life have a humorous or serious aspect for him. In all the changing fortunes of the times, in the many tribulations of his life, Walther seems to have preserved throughout his manliness and his independence. In his songs and gnomic verses there lives a strength of personality which thrilled his contemporaries and inspires in us now a deep admiration and respect for the man as well as the poet. At his death he was universally mourned and celebrated as the model singer, nowhere more beautifully than in the simple lines of Hugo von Trimberg:

*"Her Walther von der Vogelweide,
Swer des vergaeze, der taet mir leide."*¹

The poems of the Bavarian knight Neidhart von Reuenthal (died about 1245) stand in a class by themselves.

Neidhart von
Reuenthal
(d. ca. 1245).

Satiated with the artificial tone of the court, Neidhart turned to the folk-song for his inspiration and his model, and wrote many humorous dance poems, mostly in strophes of only two parts. The themes for his songs of summer, written for the dance under the linden, he took directly from village life. In his later years he also wrote winter songs constructed in three parts; these were about the dances in the peasants' cottages, and vigorously ridiculed peasant manners. The fresh, popular tone of this poetry pleased courtly audiences, for whose amusement it was partly written, hence the name *höfische Dorfpoesie*, or "village poetry

¹ "Sir Walther von der Vogelweide, For him who forgets him, I shall be sorry."

under court influence." Many imitators of Neidhart soon arose, but their poems are often merely coarse and flat.

Of the countless followers of Walther, Ulrich von Lichtenstein especially distinguished himself by his fresh, melodious songs. His autobiography, *Frauen-dienst*,¹ written in 1255, gives a vivid picture of court life in the time of its decay, and is a mine of information for the history of German life and manners in the thirteenth century. The most gifted gnomic poet after Walther is the staid knight Reinmar von Zweter (died about 1260), who was born on the Rhine but received his poetic training in Austria, probably from Walther himself.

Besides the short didactic compositions of Hergêr, Walther, Reinmar von Zweter, and other poets, we also have

Long Didactic Poems. long poems of the same type from this period. *Der welsche Gast*,² written by an Italian priest, Thomasin von Zirkläre, is a code of morals in a strictly churchly tone, and *Der Winsbeke*,³ the work of a knightly poet of Windsbach in Bavaria, contains rules of wisdom and life addressed by an old knight to his son. Both of these poems were written within the first two decades of the thirteenth century.

"Der welsche Gast" and "Der Winsbeke."

The most important long didactic poem, *Die Bescheidenheit*,⁴ was written about 1229 by a wandering

"Die Bescheidenheit."

singer who calls himself Freidank; once a townsman, Freidank belonged to the middle class of society. His poem is a charming layman's breviary, consisting largely of a series of pithy gnomic poems which embody the sterling wisdom of a rich experience; but there are also verses whose contents are based on contemporary events. The latest didactic poem of this period

¹ *Service of Lady.*

² *The Knight of Windsbach.*

³ *The Guest from Italy.*

⁴ *The Wisdom of Experience.*

is *Der Renner*,¹ so called because the content "runs" the whole gamut of life. It was written about 1300 by the Bamberg school-master Hugo von Trimberg, and shows that the spirit of knighthood was already superseded by the more practical view of life which was a characteristic of German literature in the next two centuries.

The clergy took little or no part in all this poetic activity, but the first appreciable upward tendency in German prose was directly due to an impulse which came from them. As late as the twelfth century the content of sermons was taken from Latin collections. But when the clergy began to exhort men to the Crusades, they were discussing events of their own times, and they had to cultivate a style of presentation which was clear and impressive. The popular eloquence which thus arose became still more universal through the establishment of mendicant orders; the Dominicans and Franciscans, who settled in various parts of Germany about 1220, were especially eloquent. The Franciscan monk David von Augsburg (died 1271), a gentle, conciliatory man, simple and clear in his style of address, was the first notable preacher in Germany. His pupil, Berthold von Regensburg (died 1272), was the greatest German preacher of the Middle Ages. Berthold was a preacher of penance and damnation such as the time needed, full of tremendous force of language, passionate, popular, and original, and therefore successful almost beyond belief. He went about through all northern and central Germany, and when he preached in the open fields thousands flocked to hear him.

Legal and historical prose began at this same time in north Germany. About 1230 the Saxon knight Eike von Repgow completed his *Sachsenspiegel*,² in which he wrote

¹ *The Runner.*

² *Mirror for Saxons.*

down the Saxon common law of the time in his native dialect. Many imitations of Eike's work arose in the following years in south Germany, for instance, *Der Schwabenspiegel* ¹ in Swabia. At the great Diet in Mainz in 1235 the first imperial law in the German tongue, one forbidding any disturbance of the general public peace and safety, was proclaimed by the order of the emperor Frederick II. And by 1251 a Saxon clergyman had written the first historical work in German prose, the *Sächsische Weltchronik*, ² which in time became known throughout Germany.

Legal and
Historical
Prose.

¹ *Mirror for Swabians.*

² *Saxon Chronicle of the Universe.*

CHAPTER VII

THE DECLINE OF POETRY AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES. 1300-1500

WHEN knighthood and the refinement of court life began to decline, they dragged down with them the poetic art which had accompanied chivalry. As early as the time of the interregnum, 1254-73, the interval between the fall of the Hohenstaufens and the rise of the Habsburg dynasty, the country was at the mercy of the robber knight. The latter directed his zeal toward much more practical matters than poetry, and he was forced to suffer but little interference from the various emperors and petty princes, who thought first of their own selfish political schemes and of the preservation of their own existences. With the glory of the empire sank as well all national consciousness. The strong upward tendency of commerce and the trades offered the means for a life of comfort in the towns, and there some love of literature was kept alive, although the crude simplicity of town life was very different from the exquisiteness of the old life of chivalry, and vulgarity and ignorance were very prevalent. In the literature which arose under these conditions a reader notices first a great diversity in the language employed, as everybody wrote in his own dialect; instead of the refined norm of knighthood we find an unstable language with many ugly dialectal excrescences. German literature in these centuries threatened seriously to break up into a number of more or less isolated, provincial literatures. The artistic metres also gave way to a barbarous system of versification in which a line of verse was constructed according to a fixed num-

The Causes
and Results
of the
Decline of
Poetry.

ber of syllables, the poets caring little whether this verse accent coincided with the correct accentuation of a word, or with the natural sentence accent, or not. The various kinds of epic and lyric poetry which had been so richly developed in the classical period of Middle High German were indeed increased in number, but without any sense of an ideal, and without taste. The imaginative poems of knighthood deteriorated into allegories, minnesong dried up into mastersong.

But beside the fading blossoms new buds were swelling. The folk-song now celebrated its resurrection, the beast
 New Signs of Promise. epic approached its final form, the fable was improved, the beginnings of German drama appeared; prose, too, was fostered, especially by the religious philosophers known as mystics. Charles IV's foundation of the first German university, at Prague in 1348, followed by other similar institutions, opened the way to the cultivation of learning based on the ancients, that is, to humanism. The great inventions and discoveries of the fifteenth century were also of vast consequence in the following age. Thus this period of decay in mediæval literature appears at the same time as a season of preparation for the period which begins with the Reformation.

Epic poetry prospered most, as long as it followed the trend of the time, that is, as long as it remained edifying
 Didactic Poets. and didactic. Thus sacred legend was fostered with success, but also in shorter secular stories interesting works were produced, especially in humorous tales, which were often didactic in their intent and effect. The art of fable-writing in the Middle Ages is best represented by the work of the Bernese Dominican
 Boner. monk Ulrich Boner, who, about 1340, wrote the hundred fables of his *Edelstein*,¹ after the model of Latin originals. He gave them so much new charm by the use

¹ *The Jewel.*

of epic detail that his book was long popular, and was printed as early as 1461. The most successful, purely didactic poet was the jurist Sebastian Brant (d. 1521) of Strasburg; his life fell at the end of this period, and he received the broad Latin and Greek education of the humanists, but Brant's belief in the mediæval church and its doctrines remained unshaken by the attacks of the Reformation. His chief work was the much-read didactic poem *Das Narrenschiff*,¹ written in 1494; it was the first German work that achieved fame abroad. After the manner of the humanists it ridicules the weaknesses and the crimes of the age as unreasoning, absurd follies; the "Fools" are adulterers, unbelievers, usurers, and the like.

The most famous version of the beast epic was *Reinke de Vos*,² printed at Lübeck in 1498; it was the product of an unknown Low Saxon. The source of the poem was a Dutch remoulding of the old material, but the poet alters the story rather freely, bringing the action close to his own time and environment and infusing much incisive satire and delicious humor.

National heroic poetry dragged out a wretched existence. The epics of former times were sadly disfigured, partly by additions, partly by curtailment. Minstrels inserted jests of their own merely to amuse the lower classes, and the heroic figures once so noble are often transformed into boors; the tone of these poems is that of rank doggerel. Only two are worthy of mention: the *Lied vom hürnen Siegfried*,³ which tells in its first fifteen stanzas of Siegfried's youth and fight with the dragon according to the saga, but all too briefly, and the *Jüngere Hildebrandslied*,⁴ a capital popular ballad whose spontaneous

**The Beast
Epic: "Rein-
ke de Vos"**
(1498).

**National
Heroic
Poetry.**

**"Lied vom
Hürnen
Siegfried."**

¹ *The Ship of Fools.*

² *Reynard the Fox.*

³ *Lay of Siegfried with the Horny Skin.* ⁴ *Later Lay of Hildebrand.*

humor affords a remarkable contrast with the grim spirit of the Old High German *Hildebrandslied*. In the fifteenth century the tragic conclusion of the older poem offended popular taste, and we find the later version of the story ending happily; the fight between father and son ends with their recognition of each other and an exchange of jests; both go home together, where Hildebrand's wife welcomes her long-lost husband. Both these fifteenth-century poems about Siegfried and Hildebrand are written in the shortened Nibelung strophe, that is, with the fourth line shortened by one stress, a form which is now called the "new Nibelung strophe"; with the cæsuras rimed, and the strophe thus turned into an eight-line stanza, it was called the "Hildebrand tune."

The epic of knighthood could not thrive when the order of knights had sunk so low; but wearisome attempts were made with the old machinery of the art. One of these is the last outpost of the court epic, set up by the emperor Maximilian I whom the poet Anastasius Grün called "the last knight." Maximilian's poem *Teuerdank*,¹ which was printed in Nuremberg in 1517, tells with much allegorical embroidery, and in a poetically worthless style, of Maximilian's suit for the hand of Mary of Burgundy, the emperor himself figuring as the hero Teuerdank. A much greater service was done to German literature by Maximilian when he ordered the preservation of *Gudrun*, as mentioned above.

One of the most popular forms of literature in this sober age was the rimed chronicle in which brief periods of time and stories of small communities are treated. The oldest of these chronicles go back to the end of the thirteenth century. The most val-

The Last
Epic of
Knighthood,
"Teuer-
dank."

Rimed
Chronicles.

¹ A name, "One who thinks of higher things."

uable in content is the *Deutschordenschronik*¹ by Nikolaus von Jeroschin, written about 1340; it is a record of the heroic, successful struggles which the Knights of the Teutonic Order made to obtain possession of the heathen country known as Prussia, a district that is now the north-eastern part of the kingdom of that name.

The minnesong of chivalry died out completely after it had put forth one last blossom in the poems of the Tyrolese

Minnesong
as Master-
song.

knight Oswald von Wolkenstein (died 1445).

But the traditional technic of minnesong is still evident in its sequel, mastersong. "Masters," that is, town poets who were artisans imitated the artistic verse-forms of the old minne poetry with much pedantry and goodwill, but without a spark of genius. In their clumsy hands the nice laws of the art became a sterile mass of regulations. Feeling for rhythm was dead, but a painful regard for mechanical correctness lived on. In content the mastersongs are mostly religious and didactic; now and then they tell an historical or allegorical story.

Mastersong, "the blissful art," was carried on in schools of mastersingers, and with methods which were very much

The Rules of
Mastersong.

like those of a trade, as all the members of a school were bound by a code of rules for poetic composition, which was called the *Tabulatur*. Judges regularly appointed watched closely lest a song violate the code in content or form. The content was not permitted to contradict the Bible, nor to be obscure to ordinary intelligence. As regards form, every *Par*, or song, had to have several *Gesätze*, or strophes; and every strophe, as in the minnesong, had to have two similarly constructed parts and a "concluding song"; impure rimes and the contraction of several syllables into one were forbidden. In every school there were five orders of members: pupils who were studying the code, associates who

¹ *Chronicle of the Order of Teutonic Knights.*

had learned it, singers who could deliver correctly the songs of masters, poets who could compose a text to the metre and melody of a known song, and finally masters who had invented and delivered faultlessly a new "tone," that is, text and melody in one, a mastersong. By the conditions guarding the title of master the songs grew more and more artificial, each one receiving its own name, often a very odd one, such as "the yellow lion-skin tone." But the prestige of rank as a mastersinger was so great that many candidates appeared, and the songs of the successful ones increased in number with astonishing rapidity. The schools assembled once a week in an appointed room or hall, sometimes in a church or town hall, and there the songs were delivered and judged. Mastersongs became the property of the schools, one of whose laws forbade the circulation of the songs in written or printed copies.

With all their pedantry and artistic limitations the reverential care which these honest masters bestowed on poetry deserves in itself considerable respect; and this care resulted in something tangible and laudable, in the preservation of a love of the German past, of the German language and customs. Moreover, these masters did not always bear themselves as stiffly as one might think; beside the school poetry some wrote other works with larger views, which had some real value for later literature.

The founder of the alleged oldest school of mastersingers, the one at Mainz, was said to be Master Heinrich von Meissen, called *Frauenlob*,¹ who was borne to his grave in 1318 by ladies of Mainz; he owes his cognomen to a poetic contest in which he declared, in opposition to the singer Barthel Regenbogen, that the title *Frau* was nobler than *Weib*.² As far as reliable testimony on the subject exists, it shows that the first

The Merits of
the Master-
singers.

The First and
Most Famous
Schools.

¹ "Praiser of 'Lady.'"

² "Woman."

school of mastersingers was the one which was founded in Augsburg shortly before 1450. Before the end of the century Strasburg, Worms, Nuremberg, and other cities also had schools, and later almost all the larger towns. The most renowned in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the one at Nuremberg, of which Hans Sachs, the Nestor of mastersingers, was a member. The school at Ulm, the last survivor, continued until 1839.

In this period the only genuine lyric poetry, simple and direct in feeling and expression, is to be found in the folk-song. This form of literature had, of course, existed from time immemorial and had repeatedly given new life to the poetry of men who were poets by profession; we have seen that the popular epic was based on folk-songs, and some of the greatest minnesingers, Kurenberg and Dietmar von Aist, but above all, Walther and Neidhart, owed to the folk-song much of the beauty of their poetry. But these songs of the people were not written down before the end of the fourteenth century, and then only in isolated cases. The folk-song was first considered worthy of preservation in the fifteenth century. Every folk-song, as every other poetic production, goes back to some poet; the only difference is that the author's name was usually forgotten. But the name folk-song is accurate in the implication of its being a song of the people, for two reasons: a song which now bears this title found an abiding-place in the hearts of the people through its simple form and through the wide range of its appeal, and, secondly, in the faulty memories of the people it often received a new form in which it lived on. The real folk-song is sung, not spoken; the words and melody are inseparable. Most of the folk-songs are, or were, intelligible to all classes of people alike, and popular with all; but some are limited to certain circles, for example, miners' songs, hunting songs, shepherds' songs,

The Folk-song: Its Definition and Range.

and student songs. Every emotion which a normal man can have lies within the province of the folk-song. Love naturally assumes a leading position, but nature, the joys of comradeship, and historical events are among the subjects. The most comprehensive collection of German folk-songs, by Erk and Böhme, which contains over two thousand specimens, or about one-tenth of the whole number, divides its songs into fifteen categories whose titles would seem to embrace the expression of every human emotion, but even then a sixteenth category must be added with the title "Miscellaneous." Among the purely epic folk-songs are those like the *Jüngere Hildebrandslied* which has just been mentioned, and the impressive *Tannhäuserlied*,¹ which tells a legendary story about the minnesinger Tannhäuser. The *Lied vom edlen Moringer*² also develops a story about a well-known minnesinger, in this case Heinrich von Morungen, who is described as returning home from the Orient and finding his wife about to marry another man. The most notable historical folk-song is entitled *Die Sempacher Schlacht*;³ it was written by the Swiss soldier Halbsuter of Lucerne in celebration of a famous battle of 1386.

The halcyon days of the German folk-song were in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in the days of Luther and Hans Sachs, who were deeply influenced by the songs of the people. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was duly esteemed by real poets like Gerhardt and Dach, but it was despised by many and did not recover completely from this indifference or from the paralyzing effect of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) until Herder in 1773 emphasized its poetic value and Goethe struck the roots of his lyrics in the soil it offered. Since that time, and above all, since the appear-

The Influence of the Folk-song.

¹ Lay of Tannhäuser.

² Lay of Noble Morungen.

³ The Battle of Sempach.

ance in 1806-8 of the rich collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*,¹ compiled by Arnim and Brentano, the folk-song has been the inexhaustible spring from which later German poets have drawn so much of the true lyric spirit that some of their poems have had all the popularity of folk-songs, for instance, *Sah ein Knab' ein Röslein stehn*,² *Ich hatt' einen Kameraden*,³ *In einem kühlen Grunde*,⁴ *Ich weiss nicht, was soll es bedeuten*.⁵

Even at the old Germanic festivals, long before the beginning of the Old High German period, so scholars agree,

The Begin-
nings of the
Drama.

choruses were delivered by alternating groups of people who accompanied their singing with some form of dance; in this way memorable

events in nature and the life of the people, such as the victory of spring over winter, or a battle, were symbolically suggested. These choruses, which were, of course, in the language of the people, were the beginnings of dramatic representations. But they were doomed to die, as the church persecuted them because they were rooted in pa-

Easter and
Christmas
Plays.

ganism. It replaced the pleasure they gave by presenting at Christmas, Easter, and other holy seasons plays whose language was Latin and

whose content was Christian, for example, Christ's birth, sufferings, resurrection, and second coming. These *Spiele*, or "plays," in France and England called "mysteries," can be traced back to the eleventh century. When popular interest began to lag, low-comedy scenes were inserted in which devils, quack doctors, and similar characters appeared as fun makers. At first the plays were given in the churches with music and pomp, but after a while the stage was transferred to the market-place, and finally the introduction of the German language could not be avoided

¹ *The Boy's Magic Horn.*

² "On the heath he saw a rose."

³ "I had a faithful comrade." ⁴ "'Tis in a shady hollow."

⁵ "I know not what it forebodeth."

if an audience was to be attracted and held. The best example of the older Latin plays is the *Ludus de Antichristo*, or *Spiel vom Antichrist*,¹ which came from the monastery at Tegernsee in Bavaria; it was written about 1160 by a priest who favored the emperor rather than the pope, and describes with some poetic power events preceding the Last Judgment.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries German became the accepted language of the stage, and in the place of the Latin there appears the German church drama whose character steadily grows more popular. Besides the simple Easter plays larger Passion plays were presented which endeavored to comprise all the significant events in the life of Christ, and thus satisfied more fully the general fondness for the spectacular. Numerous Easter and Passion plays and some Christmas plays have been preserved, almost all by unknown authors. An Easter play produced at Redentin near Wismar in the fifteenth century is distinguished by its sturdy humor. Still other themes were found in sacred history, in the parables of Jesus, and in church legends. The famous *Spiel von den klugen und törichten Jungfrauen*² was presented at Eisenach in 1322 in the presence of the landgrave Frederick the Faithless; the scene in which Christ refuses mercy to the foolish virgins, even at the intercession of the Virgin Mary, overcame Frederick so that he soon after fell into a fatal illness. Dramatic art is still very crude in these plays; without any designed dramatic development of the action, they are often only stories in dialogue form. Poetically the finest passages are the lyrical ones. The actors were at first churchmen and their pupils, but later the laymen also took part. Such representations have continued here and there

Church
Dramas in
German.

¹ *Play of Anti-Christ.*

² *Play of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.*

to the present day, the best-known being the Passion Play in Oberammergau.

Secular drama, or drama on non-religious subjects, arose in the fifteenth century beside the church drama,

**The First
Secular
Dramas.**

but up to 1500 it is limited to Shrovetide plays, which were performed as a last outburst of the spirit of fun before the beginning of Lent.

The minstrels of long ago had accompanied their recitals with mimicry of a very simple kind, and the people at large had practised themselves in childlike theatrical efforts by going about a town in masks, especially at Shrovetide. With the impulse given by the church drama these germs developed into the secular drama, or the drama as it is generally known to-day. Such Shrovetide plays, as devoid of art as those of the church, were produced by young people who went from house to house. Their content consists of comical scenes from daily life, such as domestic quarrels, drunkenness, court proceedings, and the duping of peasants. Often wit has degenerated into mere vulgarity. The Shrovetide plays were fostered above all in Nuremberg, and there Hans Sachs first gave real value to them as well as to German secular drama in general.

Prose took long strides in the fourteenth century, especially as written by the clergy. The misfortunes of the

Prose.

empire, the uncertainty of existence, the decay of manners, depopulating plagues,—all these

calamities of the time drove thoughtful souls to deep meditation, and awakened in them a fervent longing for a reconciliation with God as the only way of escape from the present and of hope for the future. Berthold's harrowing sermons on eternal punishment were followed now by the

The Mystics.

writings of the mystics. In the early Middle

Ages various members of the clergy, the so-called scholastics, had attempted to adapt their religious views to the philosophy of the ancients as they imperfectly

knew it, and with the aid of a few accepted deductions, based on reason, they tried to systematize and prove the church's doctrines concerning faith. With this scholasticism which mistakes the essence of faith, unreasoning belief in things which can not be proved, the mystics of the fourteenth century would have nothing to do, and they tried to reach God in another way. They strove under the guidance of innermost feeling to achieve a reconciliation with God, and they yearned, not to know Him through reason, but to attain to spiritual happiness by self-forgetful devoted contemplation of His greatness and love. Hence the chief characteristic of the writings of the mystics is intense religious feeling, in many cases combined with unusual depth of thought. The man who created and perfected mysticism, the first philosopher of religion and one of the greatest of all times, was Master Eckhart (died 1327), a Thuringian, who at one time held high offices in the church. He taught that the soul must renounce the world completely and be so absorbed by the love of God that it can experience the wonders of the incarnation and resurrection within itself. His pupil, the childlike enthusiast Heinrich Seuse, or Suso (died 1366), imbued Eckhart's teachings with higher poetic beauty; in his works everything worldly is interpreted spiritually. Johannes Tauler (died 1361), the third great mystic, considered the fulfilment of duty and active love of mankind a nobler occupation than contemplative reveries. Another church prose-writer at the end of this period was Johannes Geiler von Kaisersberg (died 1510). He was not a mystic, as he held fast to the old doctrines of the church without much complaining, and attacked only the failings of his own time in church and society.

Prose whose aim was mere amusement had also advanced before the close of the fifteenth century. Most important

Master
Eckhart
(d. 1327).

in this class are the chap-books, or popular prose romances, although they did not fully merit this name until

later, when the middle and lower classes in society began to read them. At first they were a substitute, particularly in aristocratic circles, for the vanishing poetry of the court which was often being recast in prose, as in the case of *Herzog Ernst* and Eilhart's *Tristrant*. Translations were also offered, such as *Die schöne Melusine*,¹ which appeared in a version based on a Latin poem by a Frenchman; the story *Die sieben weisen Meister*² also came from the Latin. On the other hand a real German chap-book is *Eulenspiegel*, which dates from 1483; it groups many humorous anecdotes of the time about the person of a Brunswick peasant lad who is said to have lived in the fourteenth century.

Historical prose now emancipated itself almost entirely from the use of Latin. The rimed chronicles so popular in the fourteenth century gave way gradually to chronicles in prose. Detailed descriptions lend especial worth to the *Strassburger Chronik*,³ which comes down to 1362, and to the *Limburger Chronik*,⁴ which touches 1398, while the *Thüringische Chronik*,⁵ by Johannes Rothe, completed in 1421, is the most attractive in style. And, lastly, legal prose in German is to be found in many statute books and collections of old court sentences which served as precedents in later decisions.

¹ *The Beautiful Melusina.*

² *The Seven Sages.*

³ *Strasburg Chronicle.*

⁴ *Limburg Chronicle, i. e., Limburg on the Lahn.*

⁵ *Chronicle of Thuringia.*

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY NEW HIGH GERMAN LITERATURE. 1500-1624

MODERN intellectual life began in the fourteenth century, when the poet Petrarch (died 1374) and the novelist Boccaccio (died 1375) aroused Italy to an interest in classical Greek and Latin antiquity. In the following century numerous Greek scholars came to Venice and other Italian cities as a result of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, and gave another mighty impulse to the study of the ancients by spreading the knowledge of Hellenic masterpieces. The result of this reawakening of classical antiquity was the rebirth of all Italian intellectual life, the Renaissance period of art and poetry and science. In religious life the domination of scholasticism, or faith in accord with the traditional doctrines of the church, was now past. In its place there appeared humanism, which based all culture on knowledge of the ancients, and conceived pure humanity, or the perfect intellectual life, as one moulded by an enthusiastic study of classical literature in the light of human reason; this life was the goal which the humanists sought to attain.

Starting in Italy, humanism spread throughout Europe, but in Germany it assumed a unique form. In the first place its secular, anti-clerical aspect became less prominent; Sebastian Brant, Geiler von Kaisersberg, and others studied the classics, and thus received a humanist's education, but they did not accept the humanistic ideal of pure humanity, and remained true to the mediæval doctrines of the church. Indeed German human-

The Origin
and Meaning
of the
Renaissance
and Human-
ism.

Humanism
in Germany.

ism in general, in contradistinction from that of Italy, never became wholly detached from religion. It was also for the most part limited to scholars who despised the common people. Latin was the language of the movement, and it was far more broadly intelligible to those who spoke the kindred Italian than to the average German. To the Italians the Renaissance revived largely their own antiquity, and therefore the spirit of the Italian people and the spirit of the Renaissance could go hand in hand as natural complements of each other. In Germany there was a chasm between the schooling of the learned and that of the people; here the Renaissance was an exotic. Nevertheless the new views gradually sifted through into broad strata of the population by means of various agencies. Ground had first been broken by the German mystics and by forerunners of the Reformation, notably Hus (died 1415), all of whom had helped to undermine the authority of the one existing church. There was now added the great humanistic activity of Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522) and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467-1536). The critical attitude toward the church which the humanists and early reformers strengthened, soon brought forth a general desire to investigate the written documents underlying Christian teaching. Humanism afforded the necessary means to the satisfaction of this desire, the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and thus many were led to sit at the feet of humanistic scholars. The universities were the chief centres of this instruction, and thus at the same time a most effective agent in the dissemination of humanistic views; between the establishment of the first university at Prague in 1348 and the Reformation no less than fourteen institutions of learning had been founded. The art of printing, which Johann Gutenberg had invented about 1450, was the most potent of all the aids to humanism, and to the advancement of intellectual life in general.

In place of manuscripts made by hand, a slow and expensive process, people now had printed pages, which were vastly cheaper and easily multiplied, and which brought literature within the reach of all. The discoveries of other countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially of America in 1492, also broadened life immeasurably. In this way, not only was the geographical horizon of Europe extended, but the life of all classes of society was deeply affected by the introduction of a world commerce and the use of money in buying and selling.

The final overthrow of the mediæval spirit in Germany was, however, not accomplished by humanism, but by the reformation of the church at the hands of Martin Luther and his followers, that is, by the purification of religious belief from traditions not based on Scripture, and by the reconstruction of the Christian faith in a native spirit. Humanism was always aristocratically learned, it partook always of the literary and the æsthetic, and it never discarded a tendency toward formalism. Humanism never could give to the awakening spirit of a new era what the Reformation gave it, a universal human force that swept all men into passionate participation, and, thus, a popular character. The whole conflict between the spirit of the Middle Ages and that of modern times was concentrated, through the appearance of Luther, upon the field of religion, and it was there fought out in a popular spirit. The predominating polemical and didactic character of German literature during the Reformation is a direct reflection of the religious and popular nature of the time. The champions of the faith in the sixteenth century fought indeed mainly with the weapons of the intellect, and wrote for the most part in prose. In this way German prose came into far more general use than ever before, and various polemical writers, especially Luther, wrote it with great mastery of style.

The Reformation. Its Character and Literary Expression.

Imaginative literature also drew its chief inspiration from the popular and religious, argumentative, didactic spirit of the age. The Protestant hymn, the creation of Luther, was the most powerful expression of the spirit of the reformers; but the fable and the drama were also enlisted in the service of the Reformation by Burkhart Waldis, Nikolaus Manuel, and others; and even Hans Sachs, the most gifted poet of the time, now and then forsook simple, ingenuous verse, and wrote under the spell of the great intellectual movement.

The man who gave the whole time its stamp was Martin Luther. He towers over everybody and everything else.

Luther
(1483-1546).
His Life and
Character. Even in literature he stands in the foreground, and determines the course of its development for a century. Luther was born at Eisleben on the 10th of November, 1483. At the age of twenty-one, in 1505, he entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt, but three years later he was called to a chair in the university at Wittenberg. His eyes were opened to the vast corruption in the clergy as early as 1511, on the occasion of a journey to Rome, but his allegiance to the church was not shaken until 1517. Then the unlimited sale of indulgences for all shades of misdemeanor and crime caused him to post on the church door at Wittenberg his theses condemning the practice. This open declaration of opposition to a measure sanctioned by the pope, and the debates which arose from it, led two years later to Luther's friendship with the humanist Melancthon, and to a famous controversy with the Catholic theologian Eck. In 1520 the pope formally excommunicated Luther, but the latter deliberately burned the papal bull in the presence of a vast throng in Wittenberg. He was thereupon summoned to defend his course at an Imperial Diet in Worms, in 1521, but his defence was not accepted; he refused to recant, and the Diet ultimately declared him an outlaw of the

empire. Meanwhile he had departed for home, only to be abducted on the way by friends, who wished to insure his safety, and who concealed him, under the name of "Squire George," in the Wartburg at Eisenach. Here he began his *Translation of the Bible*, and in the very next year he published his *Translation of the New Testament*. He married Katharina von Bora in 1525, thus formally renouncing monkhood. In 1529 he prepared his German Catechism, and held a religious dispute at Marburg. The *Augsburg Confession of Faith* arose under his inspiration during 1530, and in 1534 appeared his *Translation of the Bible*. In 1537 Luther and his followers held a conference at Schmalkalden in Thuringia, where they agreed to sever all connection with the Roman Catholic Church. Luther died at Eisleben on the 18th of February, 1546. "My shell may be hard, but my kernel is tender and sweet." Thus Luther characterizes himself. Sublimely confident of the holiness of his cause, he fought with equal courage against opponents of every rank and station; but in the conflict he was sometimes led, sometimes driven, into passionate acts and expressions in which he appeared violent and hard; he was, however, a sensitive man at heart, and, with all his strength and vehemence, he could be tender and gentle. He was German through and through. This combination of elements in his character explains in part the irresistible charm which he exerted upon his countrymen in his acts and in his spoken and written words.

Of Luther's achievements as a writer his *Translation of the Bible* is unquestionably the greatest. Even before his time several German versions of the Bible had been made which were of great assistance to Luther in his translation; they were, however, not based on the original texts but on the intermediate Latin version, the Vulgate, and they were clumsy in ex-

Luther's
"Translation
of the Bible"
(1534).

pression and teeming with mistakes. Luther's *Translation* was based on the texts of the originals, and in spite of scattered errors it is admirably true to the original, and unsurpassed in pregnancy of meaning, in vigor and clearness, and in use of the right word in the right place. The ideas and conceptions of life to be found in the Scriptures became through Luther the common property of all Germans; they were reflected in almost all the important literature of the following age. Great authors knew the Bible thoroughly and wrote a German which they had learned from Luther's *Translation*. The standard New High German language was established chiefly by means of this work. In choosing his instrument, Luther consciously selected the most widespread dialect of central Germany, that of southern Saxony, in the form in which it was used in the courts of the Electorate of Saxony, in at least one imperial court, that at Prague, and in most of those of the petty princes and cities. Luther chose this language, he said, "so that both High Germans and Low Germans might understand." It was a stiff official language, however, when Luther selected it, and it had to be infused with new life, and thus recreated in a form more suitable for literature. Luther accomplished the monumental task by pouring his own spirit and feeling into it, by enriching it with his wide knowledge of the language of the people, thus giving it a popular homely idiom, and, lastly, by making it a vessel with the most sacred content. The wide circulation of Luther's *Translation* and the superiority of its language gradually overcame the multiplicity of dialects in German literature, and Luther's language became the standard for all Germany, including the Catholic provinces. For over three centuries it was the one indissoluble tie which served to bind the disintegrating nation together, and thus became a national possession of incalculable value.

Besides his *Translation*, Luther also wrote original works of such force and influence that he is to be reckoned as the greatest original German prose-writer before Lessing. Three of his most famous treatises were written in 1520, *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation: von des christlichen Standes Besserung*,¹ *Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche*,² and *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*.³ All three deal with the Reformation, and all were of great historical importance. Luther's sermons, catechisms, expositions of the Bible, and polemical writings on questions of theology were likewise written in the direct service of the Reformation. Clear understanding and intense feeling are the most common characteristics of Luther's prose works; but there is evidence of great native humor and wit, for instance, in his pamphlet against the Catholic Duke Henry of Brunswick, *Wider Hans Worst*.⁴ The amiable, gentle side of Luther's character appears in his *Tischreden*,⁵ which were written down by friends, and in his letters. Luther's short treatises on secular subjects were a great stimulus to human progress in Germany throughout the sixteenth century. The one entitled *An die Ratsherren aller Städte deutsches Landes, dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen*⁶ (1524) marks the starting-point of a new epoch in German educational affairs, especially in the application of its theories by Melancthon, who received the name of *Præceptor Ger-*

¹ *To the Christian Nobles of the German Nation: On the Improvement of the Christian Body.*

² *Concerning the Babylonian Captivity of the Church.*

³ *On the Liberty of a Christian.*

⁴ *Contra Hans Worst*, a play on the name Heinrich (Hans) and Hanswurst, a "clown." Cf. below p. 107.

⁵ *Table Talks.*

⁶ *To the Councilmen of All German Cities, that They Ought to Establish and Maintain Christian Schools.*

manix, or "the teacher of Germany." Another of Luther's secular treatises, *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen*,¹ is important for the history of the German language, inasmuch as it contains Luther's exposition of the principles which guided him in his translation of the Bible. Lastly, his *Translation of the Fables of Æsop* is worthy of mention, because it reopened a neglected field of didactic composition, and made it attractive to the young.

Luther did not usually express his feeling in verse-form but he had abundant lyrical talent. His forty-one songs, thirty-seven of which have become church hymns, rise above any lyric poetry except the folk-songs between the time of Walther von der Vogelweide and the Reformation. The ardor of his faith, the sonority of his language, and the earnestness and power of the man are more than a counterbalance to the unpleasant contractions of words and the lack of harmony between verse accent and sentence accent, which are frequent in all the poetry of the time. The hymns which appeared singly or in small collections from 1524 on are especially suited for use by large congregations. Some of them were constructed after old Latin hymns, *Komm, heil'ger Geist*² after *Veni, sancte spiritus*, and *Mitten wir im Leben sind*³ after *Media vita in morte sumus*. Others are based on the Psalms, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*⁴ on Psalm 46, *Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu Dir*⁵ on Psalm 130. Some are Luther's own creations, *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her*⁶ and *Gelobet seist Du, Jesu Christ*.⁷ The battle hymn of the Reformation,

Luther's
Hymns.

¹ *Epistle on Translating.*

² "Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord."

³ "Though in midst of life we be."

⁴ "A mighty fortress is our God."

⁵ "Out of the depths I cry to Thee."

⁶ "From heaven above to earth I come."

⁷ "All praise to Thee, eternal Lord."

Ein' feste Burg, was printed in 1529 and won the support of thousands for Protestantism.

Luther did not wish to be a humanist; the aristocratic, unnational character of humanism was as uncongenial to his intensely popular German spirit, as the religious tepidity of most humanists was to his joyous faith in God. But he appreciated the

Luther's
Attitude
toward
Humanism.

good in humanism as he prized that in science and art; his fondness for music is attested by his poem *Frau Musica*. He recommended the study of the classics with honest enthusiasm and emphasized the advantage of such a study as a means of education. One of the most acute humanists, Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), the founder

Humanists
in the Ref-
ormation.

of the German Latin School, was won over by Luther as a steadfast assistant in the work of the Reformation. Erasmus of Rotterdam at first applauded Luther's attacks on the papacy and monastic life, but afterward ridiculed his vehemence. Various older humanists looked on at the Reformation without understanding it; but the manly, patriotic humanist, Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523), greeted the bold deeds of the monk of Wittenberg with warm enthusiasm, and supported him faithfully with a sharp pen. Hutten wrote mainly in Latin until near the end of his life, when he used German in order to reach all his countrymen. His *Gesprächbüchlein*,¹ written in 1521, is a vigorous attack on clerical abuses. The *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*² (1515-17), a collection of letters satirizing the immorality and ignorance of the monks, consists, in part, of letters written by Hutten. His motto, *Ich hab's gewagt*,³ is the beginning of a song in which he announces his enlistment in the struggle for religious liberty. The most important younger humanists of the sixteenth century, Joachim Camerarius,

¹ *A Little Book of Discourses.*

² *Epistles of Obscure Men.*

³ "I have dared."

Johann Sturm, Valentin Trotzendorf, and Michael Neander, were also partisans of the Reformation and leaders in educational matters along the lines of Luther and Melancthon.

The supreme expression of the dominant religious character of this age is the Protestant hymn. Nurtured in the spirit of Luther, it was the spontaneous embodiment of the most joyous zeal, and one of the most precious possessions of the devout believers in the new faith. Many songs were scattered about in the form of single leaflets like folk-songs, but Luther prompted various general collections, the first *Enchiridion*, or "hand-book," in 1524; these were the basis of later song-books for individual congregations. Many secular songs, especially folk-songs, were transformed into hymns. Numerous poets gave original, vigorous expression to evangelical stanchness of faith and enthusiasm, as Luther had done before them, and enriched the rapidly increasing store of Protestant hymns. The following songs merit especial mention: *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*¹ and *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig*² by Nikolaus Decius (died 1541), *Lass mich dein sein und bleiben*³ by Nikolaus Selnecker (died 1592), and *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*⁴ and *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*⁵ by Philipp Nicolai (died 1608).

Among the authors who were hostile to the Reformation, the most able and effective was the passionate Franciscan monk Thomas Murner (1475-1537). His gift of satire is best illustrated in his poems *Narrenbeschwörung*⁶ (1512), *Die Schelmenzunft*⁷ (1512), and *Die Gäuchmatt*⁸ (1519). He opposes the Reformation

Protestant
Hymns
in General.

Murner
(1475-1537).

¹ "All glory to God on high."

² "O Lamb of God most holy."

³ "Let me be Thine forever."

⁴ "How lovely shines the Morning Star."

⁵ "Wake, awake, for night is flying."

⁶ *The Exorcism of Fools.*

⁷ *The Rogues' Guild.*

⁸ A name, "Fools' Meadow."

directly in the witty, malicious poem *Von dem grossen lutherischen Narren*¹ (1522).

The leading poet of the Reformation period is a sturdy German artisan, Hans Sachs. He was born, the son of a tailor, in Nuremberg, November 5, 1494. After
Sachs
(1494-1576).
His Life. he had attended a Latin school for several years, he was apprenticed, in 1509, to a shoemaker, and at the same time studied the art of the master-singers. In 1512 he started on his travels as a journeyman. During his absence of five years he saw a great part of Germany, and laid the foundation of his astonishing knowledge of men. On his return to Nuremberg he soon acquired a modest competence, and lived an unusually happy married life with Kunigunde Kreutzer. In 1523 the simple shoemaker entered the front ranks of the partisans of Luther with his poem *Die Wittenbergische Nachtigall*.² Old age brought him many sorrows; his seven children died one after another, and, after a marriage of forty years, his wife also. But he was happily married again, this time with a widow who was nearly fifty years younger than himself. He died at an advanced age, universally honored and loved, on the 19th of January, 1576.

Sachs absorbed the manifold inspiration of his age and environment with zeal and ease. Translations of the
The Sources
of His In-
spiration and
Their Effect. humanists offered him much, but he drew still more from fellow-citizens in Nuremberg, from Albrecht Dürer the painter, Peter Vischer the bronze-worker, Wilibald Pirckheimer the highly educated humanist and town councilman, and others. Sachs also studied the Bible and Luther's writings with great enthusiasm. The four *Gespräche*³ on Reformation questions, which he wrote in 1524, show perhaps more clearly

¹ *Concerning the Great Lutheran Fool.*

² *The Nightingale of Wittenberg.*

³ *Discourses.*

than his other writings all the honest middle-class elements of his nature, his love of humor, his kindliness, and his great German manliness. Like Luther, he was an ardent patriot; his poem calling upon all to unite against the "bloodthirsty Turk" is as warm an expression of his love of country as his poems on Nuremberg are of his civic pride. By his origin and station in life, by education, and by natural disposition, Sachs united in his modest way the three elements of the new culture of his time, humanism, religion, and democracy. To be sure, his poetry is not that of a master; it is too limited in range of thought and too clumsy in expression. Its content is, in accord with the spirit of his age, didactic through and through; its form is often intolerable to our feeling for rhythm on account of the prevailing system of counting syllables. In these respects Sachs was a child of his time; and in his day mediæval art had passed away and modern art was not yet born. But he was ahead of his time in breadth of view and in gentleness of humor, and the fault was not his but that of the calamities of the following century, if the seeds he planted did not bring forth a new harvest in German literature, especially in the drama. The scholars of the seventeenth century looked down on this poet of the people with foolish disdain; but when Goethe began his career, he was deeply influenced by the wholesome poetry of this old Nuremberg citizen, and in the poem *Hans Sachsens poetische Sendung*¹ he redeemed Sachs's memory by a true and just appreciation of his spirit and art. The noblest tribute in dramatic form which has been paid to Sachs is in Richard Wagner's music drama *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.²

Sachs was one of the most prolific writers of verse the world has ever known. His mastersongs and gnomic

¹ *Hans Sachs's Poetical Mission.*

² *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg.*

poems number over six thousand separate compositions, and, besides these, he wrote over two hundred dramas.

His Master-
songs and
Gnomic
Verse.

His mastersongs were written in accordance with the mastersingers' code, and consequently they are often very artificial in form. Their content, however, is sometimes important for the literary history of the time, as Sachs now and then drafted "the blissful art" into the active service of the Reformation; he turned various portions of Luther's Bible into a lyrical form. He wrote his gnomic verses with much greater freedom and ease; their short riming couplets have nothing to do with the code. In these verses, too, Sachs is a champion of the Reformation; his most famous poem of this character is the one to Luther, *Die Wittenbergische Nachtigall*, a rather prolix allegory with the spirited beginning:

*Wacht auf! Es nahent gen dem Tag!
Ich hör' singen im grünen Hag
Ein' wunnigliche Nachtigall.¹*

Of Sachs's gnomic poetry on secular themes the more lyrical poems often contain tender feeling and wise insight, such as we find in the *Traum von meiner abgeschiedenen lieben Gemahel Kunigund Sächsin*² and *Lobspruch der Stadt Nürnberg*.³ The most successful, however, are the longer, epical, gnomic poems, especially the unsurpassed *Schwänke*, or "short, witty, dramatic sketches." The serene good-humor and moral soundness of his *S. Peter mit der Geiss*,⁴ *S. Peter mit den Landsknechten*,⁵ *Das Schlauraffenland*,⁶ *Das Unholden-Bannen*,⁷ *Die Hasen*

¹ "Awake! The day is drawing near! In the hedge-row, loud and clear, there sings a lovely nightingale."

² *A Vision of My Dear Deceased Wife Kunigunde Sachs.*

³ *Eulogy of the City of Nuremberg.*

⁴ *St. Peter and the Goat.*

⁵ *St. Peter and the Soldiers.*

⁶ *Fools' Paradise.*

⁷ *The Exorcising of Goblins.*

fangen und braten den Jäger,¹ and other *Schwänke* are even still a delight. Sachs was also very happy in his presentation of the fable, although he was not as well known in this respect as Burkhart Waldis (born about 1490, died 1556 or 1557). The latter's *Esopus* (1548), a collection of fables based largely on Æsop and others, was an efficient aid to the Reformation by its treatment of church questions from the standpoint of the reformers. Another imitation of the ancients, the *Froschmeuseler*² (1595) by Georg Rollenhagen (died 1609), treats a theme akin to that of the beast epic.

There was astounding activity in the field of drama during the Reformation, arising partly from the study of classical drama in the schools, partly from the encouragement of Luther. The so-called "school drama" was mostly in Latin and after the model of Terence; it was cultivated by scholars and produced in the schools, but, besides this, there was the popular German drama presented by townspeople, such as *Der verlorene Sohn*³ (1527) by Waldis, and *Susanna* (1535) by Paul Rebhun (born about 1500, died 1546). Both kinds often have polemical aims; popular plays by Nikolaus Manuel (died 1536) were written in direct opposition to the sale of indulgences and the saying of masses for the dead. Luther recognized the educational value of the stage, and recommended the nurture of the drama in general, even of that on religious subjects; he excepted only the Passion play, since the advent of Protestantism had caused dramatized legends of the saints to disappear of themselves. The widespread knowledge of the whole Bible offered a copious supply of themes. Hans Sachs, the greatest dramatic talent of the time, started out from the new Biblical drama of the Reformation. His plays were

The Drama
of the Period,
by Sachs
and Others.

¹ *The Rabbits Catch and Roast the Hunter.*

² *Frogs and Mice.*

³ *The Prodigal Son.*

written with amazing rapidity in short riming couplets; the most inadequate are those on tragic subjects, because Sachs's gentle nature was never equal to the rigors of tragedy. Sachs also found dramatic material in history, in sagas, for instance *Der hürnen Seufried*¹ (1557), and in short stories. Luther had banished the coarser farcical elements from religious drama, but Sachs found a place for genial humor as well as for seriousness. The influence of the Reformation on family life is delightfully embodied in the "Comedia" *Die ungleichen Kinder Evä*;² God Himself appears and tests the sons of Adam in the Lutheran Catechism. Sachs's greatest service to the drama, however, was his regeneration of the Shrovetide play. Not only are the indecencies of his predecessors missing, but there is real literary significance in *Frau Wahrheit will niemand herbergen*,³ *Das heisse Eisen*,⁴ *Der fahrend Schüler im Paradeis*,⁵ *Das Narrenschneiden*,⁶ and similar plays. In the lively dialogue, in the simple construction of the action, in the beginnings of real characterization, and in the abounding humor we can see germs which under favorable circumstances might easily have developed into German comedy.

Sachs is superior to contemporary English dramatists in almost every respect. But while national drama developed swiftly and unimpeded in England up to Shakespeare, it deteriorated very rapidly in Germany. Troupes of English players, the so-called English Comedians, roamed through Germany for many years from the end of the sixteenth century on. First in English and gradually in German they presented plays of varying merit, which they had brought with them. The plays of Jakob

The English
Comedians.

¹ *Siegfried with the Horny Skin.*

² *The Unlike Children of Eve.*

³ *Nobody will harbor Dame Truth.*

⁴ *The Hot Iron.*

⁵ *The Vagabond Student in Paradise.*

⁶ *The Excision of Follies.*

Ayrer (died 1605), who was not without natural dramatic talent, are almost the only ones in German which show any immediate influence of the English importations. The troublous events leading up to the Thirty Years' War had begun by this time, and one of their consequences was the complete stagnation of the native, national drama. During the war itself there is only the unnational artificial drama of the schools. Besides his dramas in verse Heinrich Julius, Duke of Brunswick from 1589 to 1613, also wrote the first German dramas in prose.

The most eventful years of the Reformation were past when Johann Fischart (born about 1550 in Strasburg, Fischart (ca. 1550-90). died 1590) began to write. The dissensions between Lutherans and Calvinists had started the factional strife among the Protestants, Catholicism was organizing a "Counter-Reformation," and the Jesuit Order, which had been founded in 1540, was beginning its labors; the unifying love of the common fatherland was yielding to the forces of party loyalty. Fischart, who was equipped with a scholarly education, used his talents mainly in polemical writings. With keen wit he fought against the Jesuits in *Das vierhörnige Hütlein*¹ (1580), and parodied the weather prophecies of calendars in his *Aller Praktik Grossmutter*² (1572). His main work *Geschichtsschrift*, later called *Geschichtsklitterung, von Taten und Raten der Helden Gargantua und Pantagruel*³ (1575) is a humorously satiric story of giants which Fischart borrowed from the French author Rabelais (died 1553); the object of the book is the mockery of vices and follies. The controversial element is less conspicuous in the humorous *Philosophisches Ehezuchtbüchlein*⁴ (1578), although it strikes out

¹ *The Four-Cornered Hat.*

² *The Grandam of All Calendars.*

³ *Historical Record, Historical Sketch, of the Acts and Counsels of the Heroes Gargantua and Pantagruel.*

⁴ *Philosophical Marriage-Book.*

at the celibacy of monkhood. The broadly comical *Flöh-hatz* ¹ (1573), in which the fleas bewail their lot, is innocent in its intent; so, too, is the serious story *Das glückhafte Schiff* ² (1576), whose insignificant subject is thoughtfully used for the glorification of undaunted energy and public spirit; its story is that of the citizens of Zurich who in 1576 rowed down the Limmat, Aar, and Rhine to Strasburg with a pot of millet porridge before it grew cold. The *Hütlein*, *Flöh-hatz*, and *Schiff* are in verse, the other works mentioned are in prose. In both forms of expression Fischart commands the language with astonishing readiness, and he is fairly inexhaustible in new comical combinations of words, but his linguistic cleverness leads him not infrequently into vapid punning. He has little sense of form in his works, and he nearly always uses foreign models instead of creating for himself, but he adorns his borrowed themes with bright, witty additions and elaborations. Under the cloak of satire and humor he conceals a manly way of thinking and deep feeling. The last appears occasionally in his shorter poems and gnomic verses, his feeling for his native land in the poem *Ernstliche Ermahnung an die lieben Deutschen*,³ and his religious feeling in his *Geistliche Lieder und Psalmen*⁴ and *Christliche Unterrichtung oder Lehrtafel*.⁵

A large circle of readers welcomed the numerous lighter prose works which the time offered in the form of translations from the French and Italian. The most conspicuous of these after 1569 is the endless story of knighthood, *Amadis aus Frankreich*,⁶ which was originally Spanish and then translated and continued in France before it was rendered into German. It is a caricature of knighthood,

The Chap-
books of the
Period and
the First
German
Novels in
Prose.

¹ *Flea-Hunt.*

² *The Lucky Ship.*

³ *Earnest Counsel to the dear Germans.*

⁴ *Spiritual Songs and Psalms.*

⁵ *Christian Teaching or Plan of Instruction.*

⁶ *Amadis of France.*

strained, mawkish, and immoral, but it was the delight of the aristocracy. There is a much sounder core in the chap-books *Fortunatus und seine Söhne*,¹ which was perhaps taken from the English, *Kaiser Octavianus* (1535), *Magelone* (1536), and *Die vier Haimonskinder*² (1535), which were French in origin. The popular tale of Dr. Faust (1587) and the one called *Die Schildbürger*³ (1597) arose in Germany. Jörg Wickram (died about 1560) wrote the oldest German prose novels, among others *Der Goldfaden*⁴ (1557); he invented them with great ease, unconcernedly mixing romantic knighthood and contemporary town life. Collections of anecdotes, such as Wickram's *Rollwagenbüchlein*⁵ (1555), and *Schimpf und Ernst*⁶ (1522) by Johann Pauli (1455–1530), were also very popular.

In the sphere of educational prose there are noteworthy attempts at geographical and historical description by Sebastian Frank in his *Weltbuch*⁷ and *Chronica*, and by Ægidius Tschudi in his *Schweizerchronik*,⁸ which was later the chief source of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*. These works, as well as the first printed collections of proverbs, show the popularizing tendency of the time; even men of science give evidence of it in their works.

Prose with
the Purpose
of Instruc-
tion.

¹ *Fortunatus and His Sons.*

³ *The Residents of Schilda.*

⁵ *Coach-Book.*

⁷ *Book of the Universe.*

² *The Four Children of Aymon.*

⁴ *The Gold Thread.*

⁶ *Jest and Earnest.*

⁸ *Swiss Chronicle.*

CHAPTER IX

THE PSEUDO-RENAISSANCE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN IDEALS. 1624-1700

As religious differences became more acute, and as the imperial house of Habsburg tried harder to check the

The Thirty
Years' War
(1618-48). Reformation, national consciousness waned, and the use of fire and sword in the settlement of religious disputes became more and more frequent. In 1618 matters at last came to a head, and the Thirty Years' War broke forth, an era of devastation and depopulation in Germany that is unparalleled in history. In the course of the war, the Protestants were forced by their adverse fortunes to call upon the help of France against the might of the Habsburgs, and thus, in addition to her other calamities, Germany became the prey of the foreigner. The war resulted in the recognition of religious liberty, and the German empire remained an independent political unit; but the internal condition of the country had become so abject that many years had to pass before men regained the hope and confidence and joy in life which inspire real literature.

The general uncertainty of existence down into the second half of the seventeenth century, the degeneration of morals, the decay of national feeling, and the Its Effect on
Literature. aping of French life at the large and small courts necessarily exerted an evil influence on literature. Inclination for a higher intellectual life and for true refinement was limited to circles which constantly grew smaller. The language was again corrupted, as in the

thirteenth century, by the adoption of countless foreign words and phrases, especially from the French. Some men of high station who were solicitous for the native tongue tried to remedy the evil by forming language associations whose aim was to purify German, but they accomplished their object very imperfectly. The foremost of these associations, *Die Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, or "fruit-bringing society," also called the *Palmenorden*,¹ was established in Weimar in 1617 by four princes; its membership included in time the leading men of the century, one of whom was the Great Elector of Brandenburg. Frederick William, the ancestor of later kings of Prussia and of the last three German emperors. *Die Deutschgesinnte Genossenschaft*, or "company of German patriots," founded in Hamburg in 1643 by Philipp von Zesen, went too far in its attempts to purify the language, and injured the cause by falling into puristic exaggerations. *Die Gesellschaft der Hirten an der Pegnitz*, or "society of shepherds on the Pegnitz," also called the *Blumenorden*,² was established in Nuremberg in 1644; it combined in its purpose the nurture of both poetry and the native tongue.

The study of classical antiquity which was continued only in the quiet abodes of scholars, bore wholesome fruit for literature in regard to form, namely, in some phases of the remoulding of German metrical art by Opitz, but the example which Opitz set caused poetry to assume an unnational character. Instead of developing the national poetry of the preceding century, Opitz broke with the past completely, and earnestly urged the mechanical imitation of the Renaissance poetry of France, Italy, and Holland. He thus called an era into being which is known as the Pseudo-Renaissance. The art of the school poets fell into line with Opitz's rules of poetics. Popular literary activity which was scorned

Language
Associations.

The Pseudo-
Renaissance.

¹ *Palm Order.*

² *Flower Order.*

by the scholars, stirred at times nevertheless, especially in religious lyrics, where the regeneration of religious life had a powerful after-effect. Now and then secular literature, too, for example, the epigrammatic poetry of Logau, the comedies of Gryphius, and Grimmelshausen's greatest work, is distinctly popular in tone.

Martin Opitz (born 1597 at Bunzlau in Silesia; died 1639 at Danzig) received a thorough education in the ancient and modern languages, and under the inspiration of foreign authors he soon began to cherish the ambition to raise German poetry to the level of that of other countries. For this purpose he wrote a small book, *Von der deutschen Poeterei*¹ (1624), a kind of poetics whose rules concern the language, metrical form, and content of poetry. Opitz deserves praise for opposing any use of the French language in Germany, and for his stand against the contempt heaped upon literature in the vernacular, but the path he took to correct matters was not the right one. His first endeavor was to make German poetry acceptable to scholars and to the aristocracy. He therefore borrowed his theory of the art of poetry from the works of the learned Renaissance poets of France, and thus impressed upon German poetry the stamp of imitation. He purged the language, to be sure, of unnecessary foreign words; but at the same time, in place of popular spontaneity, he gave it mere verbal correctness, and advocated mythological and historical allusions as ornaments of style. In matters of external form, he wisely put an end to the sixteenth century's crude and unnatural versification. He retained the counting of syllables, but insisted upon the coincidence of the verse accent with the accent which would naturally be given to a word and sentence. He made a serious mistake in requiring the regular alternation of accented and unaccented syllables. German rhythm is

Opitz
(1597-1639)
and His
Reforms.

naturally very free in this respect, and by taking away its freedom Opitz robbed it of much of its beauty; according to his rules, lines like Goethe's *Es war ein König in Thule*¹ are impossible. Opitz also introduced the French Alexandrine verse, that is, a line of twelve or thirteen syllables which is divided in half by a cæsura and whose two parts rime with each other. This innovation was another blunder, as German gives a much stronger accent to some words than to others, and the smooth flow of the French Alexandrine when turned into German soon becomes monotonous. Unfortunately, too, it crowded out native verse-forms, and its domination was not overthrown until the appearance of Klopstock's lyrics and Lessing's dramas; some later poets, especially Rückert, have tried to reinstate it. Even the content of poetry was fatefully regulated in this period by Opitz. His long didactic poems inaugurated the imitation of Italian descriptive poetry which Lessing afterward attacked in his *Laokoon*. Opitz's musical play *Dafne* was the first of those operas which were written solely to embellish court functions; their influence was sufficient to drive out German popular drama almost entirely. Further, Opitz's *Schäferei von der Nympe Hercynie*² introduced artificial shepherd poetry, the Arcadian idyl, with its sentimental nymphs and cultured shepherds. By example Opitz opened the way in lyric poetry to the most trivial compositions written in honor of festal occasions. His poetical works are what we might expect from his theories, sober and devoid of personal feeling. Almost everything he wrote is an imitation; his *Trostgedichte in Widerwärtigkeit des Krieges*³ are the only poems or work in which we find a reflection of personal experience.

¹ "There was a king in Thule."

² *Pastoral Play about the Nymph Hercynia.*

³ *Poems of Consolation amid the Adversities of War.*

The example of Opitz set the standard for most of the poets of the following years in all Germany, but as the majority of his direct disciples came from Silesia, like himself, they are often classed together under the name of the (First) Silesian School.

Many of them are in creative talent far above their admired master. One of these is the sturdy patriot Friedrich von

Logau (1604-55), whose literary fame is based on his epigrams. He wrote over three thousand

of these, scourging in jest and earnest the chief evils of the age, the political disintegration of Germany, the affectation of foreign manners, the confusion of languages, and the disputes between the schools of theology; aphorisms on human life in general are also included in the collection. Logau's real significance was first fully recognized by Lessing, who united with Ramler in 1759 in editing and publishing a collection of Logau's epigrams.

Logau was influenced by Opitz in language and verse, but he was by no means as devoted a follower of the master

as Paul Fleming (1609-40), the greatest lyric poet of the age. Fleming's mental horizon, however, was extended far beyond the petty conditions of life in Germany by a long journey through Russia and Persia, which he undertook as physician to a company of emissaries of Duke Frederick of Holstein. He also possessed a healthier moral core than his revered Opitz. His depth of feeling and his mastery of lyrical art are illustrated by such poems as *In allen meinen Taten*,¹ written in 1633 in anticipation of his journey, and *Ein getreues Herze wissen hat des höchsten Schatzes Preis*.² His occasional poems are negligible, but his sonnets display a rare gift of form, especially the proud epitaph *Ich war an Kunst und Gut und Stande gross und reich*,³ which the

¹ *In All My Acts*.

² "To know a faithful heart is worth the greatest treasure."

³ "In knowledge, wealth, and standing I was great and rich."

young poet wrote for himself three days before his death.

Andreas Gryphius (1616-64) contributed to the large volume of occasional poetry after the example of Opitz, but he also wrote thoughtful poems in which he bewails the wretchedness of the time with genuine feeling, although not without pedantic pathos. His lyrics are always overshadowed by a cloud of bitter resignation, as in the first couplet of one of his poems,

*Die Herrlichkeit der Erden
Muss Staub und Asche werden.*¹

The drama was his real forte. His tragedies, *Karolus Stuardus*² (1657) and others, which are imitations mostly of the Dutch dramatist Vondel (1587-1679) and the first notable German dramas in Alexandrines, are intolerable now on account of their stilted exaggerated rhetoric and the substitution of the horrible for the tragic. But in his three prose comedies, Gryphius throws aside the scholar's stilts and descends to a vivid humorous presentation of life among the lower classes. *Horribilicribrifax* (1663) wittily ridicules the braggartism of soldiery, which burst forth during the Thirty Years' War as never before, as well as the mixture of languages; but in execution the drama is overburdened with details, and the action is without suspense. Much more delectable is the drama *Peter Squenz*, in which a would-be touching play called *Pyramus und Thisbe* is presented with unconscious humor by a group of Silesian artisans before an aristocratic audience. The main idea of this episode had become known in Germany when the English Comedians presented Shakespeare's *Midsummer-Night's Dream* with its similar scene; Gryphius found it in a Dutch and English version

¹ "The glory of the earth must dissolve in dust and ashes."

² *Charles Stuart*, i. e., Charles I of England.

of Shakespeare's play. Gryphius's talent for humorous description of popular life is most apparent in *Die geliebte Dornrose*,¹ a peasants' comedy written in part in the Silesian dialect. This comedy and a musical play, *Das verliebte Gespenst*² (1660), are woven together in such a manner that the respective themes of the two plays, true love among the lowly and the exalted in station, are presented alternately act by act. The *Dornrose* is the best German comedy before Lessing; its character drawing and the development of its action reveal an art that had advanced not a little since the days of Hans Sachs. Unfortunately it was not the popular spontaneous comedies of Gryphius which aroused imitation, but his tragedies, and of these the very worst feature, their exaggerated pathos. Thus another beginning of comedy failed, and Lessing a century later had to lay a new foundation.

The so-called Königsberg poets also honored Opitz as their master. This group consisted of a fraternal circle of poets and musicians formed in Königsberg toward the end of the Thirty Years' War.

The Königs-
berg Poets.

They excel most of their contemporaries in the simple expression of genuine feeling, although they too practised the making of rimes for special occasions. They exerted, unfortunately for the period, no large influence. The most eminent of the group is Simon Dach (1605-59). Several

Dach

(1605-59).

of his poems are still generally cherished: his warm praise of friendship, *Der Mensch hat nichts so eigen*,³ various religious poems, *Ich bin ja, Herr, in deiner Macht*,⁴ and *O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen*,⁵ and the love poem *Ännchen von Tharau*, which was originally written in Dach's native dialect: *Anke von Tharaw öss*,

¹ *The Beloved Rose-among-Thorns.*

² *The Lovelorn Ghost.*

³ "Man has nothing so his own."

⁴ "I'm Thine, oh Lord, and Thine alone."

⁵ "O, how blest are ye whose toils are ended."

de mi geföllt.¹ Herder afterward turned *Ännchen* into High German, and in this version it has enjoyed the wide popularity of a folk-song.

The greatest advance in literary development during this troublous time was made by religious poetry. Building on the foundations of Luther and respecting the innovations of Opitz only in matters of form, religious poets gave expression to new phases of life. The older church songs were intended to be congregational hymns, and were, for the most part, objective expressions of universal Protestant Christian faith. The authors of the church songs of the seventeenth century, however, also expressed their personal relations to God and their subjective devout moods. These later religious poems are thus much more varied in content, they are poetically more attractive and more tender than the older ones, but they lack the power of those by Luther and his contemporaries. The joyous militant faith of the sixteenth century had been succeeded by a faith which was strong, but humbled by adversity and resigned to any dispensation of Providence; men sought and found in such a faith their only refuge from the universal misery of the time. There are numerous Protestants among these

Minor
Authors.

poets and a few Catholics; among the former, besides Fleming, Gryphius, and Dach, are Johann Heermann (died 1647): *Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen?*² and *O Gott, du frommer Gott*,³ Martin Rinckart (died 1649): *Nun danket alle Gott*,⁴ and Johann Rist (died 1667): *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort*⁵ and *Werde munter, mein Gemüte*.⁶ Two Catholics, Friedrich

¹ "Annie of Tharaw, my true love of old."

² "What laws, my blessed Saviour, hast Thou broken?"

³ "O God, Thou faithful God."

⁴ "Now thank we all our God."

⁵ "Eternity, terrific word."

⁶ "Sink not yet, my soul, to slumber."

Spee and Johann Scheffler, were among the most gifted lyric poets of the time. The former (1591-1635) was a gentle Jesuit withal, but a courageous champion of the movement against trials for witchcraft. With not unjustified self-confidence Spee called his collected poems *Trutznachtigall* (1649), because they were to sing "better than the nightingale." Johann Scheffler (1624-77) of Breslau, also called Angelus Silesius, went over from the Protestant to the Catholic Church, and is thus a representative of both confessions. The collection of his hymns entitled *Heilige Seelenlust*¹ (1657) contains *Ich will dich lieben, meine Stärke*² and *Liebe, die du mich zum Bilde*,³ hymns which he wrote when a Protestant, and *Mir nach, spricht Christus, unser Held*,⁴ written from a Catholic stand-point. His half-mystic, half-pantheistic little book *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*⁵ (1657) also appeared after his recantation of Protestantism; it is a series of profoundly thoughtful aphorisms.

The evangelical church acquired a storehouse of beautiful hymns in the poems of Paul Gerhardt, the greatest religious poet after Luther. He was born at
 Gerhardt (1607-76). Gräfenhainichen near Halle in 1607. While Dean of the Church of St. Nicholas in Berlin, he opposed the edict of the Great Elector of Brandenburg which forbade pulpit mention of doctrinal differences between two branches of the Protestant faith, the Lutherans and the Reformed Church, and laid down his office for conscience' sake in 1666. He became the head of another church, however, in Lübben, and died there in 1676. Steadfast faith and Christian gentleness are the chief characteristics of Gerhardt's hymns. The following are a few of

¹ *Holy Joy for the Soul.*

² "Thee would I love, my strength, my tower."

³ "Lord, Thine image Thou hast lent me."

⁴ "Rise, follow me, our Master saith."

⁵ *The Heavenly Wanderer.*

the best-known: *Wie soll ich dich empfangen,*¹ *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden,*² *Wach auf, mein Herz, und singe,*³ *Nun ruhen alle Wälder,*⁴ *Befiehl du deine Wege,*⁵ *Ich weiss, dass mein Erlöser lebt,*⁶ and the song of jubilant thanksgiving over the close of the war, *Gott Lob, nun ist erschollen das edle Fried- und Freudenwort.*⁷ Gerhardt's influence can be easily traced in the hymns of other writers of the time. Toward the end of the century, however, church songs began to deteriorate; little by little they became trivial in spirit and florid in style.

Opitz's colorless, tedious products of rules and regulations called forth a reaction in the second half of the seventeenth century. Fancy, which had no place in Opitz's conception of poetry, demanded the restoration of her rights. Considerable praise is due to the men who first revolted against Opitz, but unfortunately they wandered far astray into a confusion which was just as unpoetic as the dry soberness of the older school. They, like Opitz, went abroad for their models, and they found them in Italian literature. The days of Ariosto and Tasso were, however, past, and the poets of Italy were now following the pernicious course of bombast and far-fetched figures of speech which the Neapolitan Marino (died 1625) and his disciples had introduced. The German imitators of these later Italians, the so-called Marinistic poets, outdid their models in imaginative extravagance. Opitz remained the standard in external form, but the moral decency which the master had always preserved now gave way to wanton frivolousness. The leading represent-

Reaction
Against
Opitz.

¹ "O, how shall I receive Thee."

² "O sacred head now wounded."

³ "My soul, awake and render."

⁴ "Now all the woods are sleeping."

⁵ "Commit thou all thy griefs."

⁶ "I know that my Redeemer lives."

⁷ "Praise God, the noble note of peace and joy is sounded."

atives of this Second Silesian School were Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau (1617-79), a native of Breslau, and Casper von Lohenstein (1635-83). The former had remarkable lyrical talent, but he soon prostituted it by writing countless occasional poems. His style is a maze of figures of speech, and offends us as much as his shameless sensuality. Lohenstein, who was more of a rhetorician, outdid Gryphius in frightful bloody tragedies such as *Agrippina*, and made the expression "Lohenstein bombast" proverbial in Germany. His gigantic novel *Grossmütiger Feldherr Arminius nebst seiner durchlauchtigsten Thusnelda*¹ (1689-90), which was undertaken out of patriotic pride, runs riot in tasteless pedantry and masses of confusing episodes. The spirit of this and other works remained indeed foreign to the main body of the German people, but many poets admiringly followed Hofmann and Lohenstein, and furthered the corruption of literary taste among higher circles of society.

The evils of such literature as that of the Second Silesian School were too great to be ignored. Various men of literary talent in Germany, men with some natural feeling and some healthy common-sense, rose in opposition. The most conspicuous of these was the Zittau school rector Christian Weise (1642-1708), who hated Lohenstein bombast, and aimed at the simplicity of style which he had learned from the French classic poets of the seventeenth century. Weise's works are trivial in character, but he wrote numerous school dramas, in particular witty prose comedies such as the *Bäuerischer Machiavellus*² (1679), which were once very popular. His plays surpass those of Gryphius, especially in the closer connection and interdependence which

Counter-
Reaction.

Weise
(1642-1708).

¹ *Gallant General Arminius* (i. e., the old Germanic hero Hermann) together with his Most Illustrious (Consort) *Thusnelda*.

² *A Peasant Machiavelli*.

is established between different scenes, and they thus mark an advance over older German dramas. *Die drei ärgsten Erznarren in der ganzen Welt*¹ (1672) is the best of Weise's satirical novels, but these as well as his lyric poems are of little importance as compared with his plays. One may commend the pleasing lightness of expression in Weise's work and his twofold literary purpose, to provide a counterbalance to the high-flown fashionable poetry of his time, and to strengthen the influence of the mother-tongue among the scholars, but there is hardly any deep poetic content in anything he wrote.

Most of the seventeenth-century poets despised the people, as we have seen, but the leading contemporaneous prose-writers were broader in their views of life. Besides fashionable gallant novels for the courtly and educated classes, they wrote for the people stories about the wretched state of popular life during war time. Hans Michael Moscherosch (1601-69) is famous for his pedantic but vivid sketches of current evils, such as the wild life of the soldiery. His best work is *Gesichte Philanders von Sittewald*² (1645), written largely in imitation of a Spanish collection of stories and interspersed with satirical observations. Satire was indeed the greatest gift of both Moscherosch and Balthasar Schupp (1610-61). Schupp, however, wrote more from the standpoint of the people; he attacked the claptrap or fashionable poetry in his little book *Der deutsche Lehrmeister*,³ and drew realistic pictures of seventeenth-century manners in numerous brief works. A still greater satirist than either of these was the court chaplain at Vienna, Father Abraham a Santa Clara, originally called Ulrich Megerle (1644-1709). His most com-

Prose
Satirists.

Moscherosch
(1601-69).

Santa Clara
(1644-1709).

¹ *The Three Biggest Fools in the Whole World.*

² *Visions of Philander von Sittewald.*

³ *The German Instructor.*

prehensive work is *Judas der Erzscheim*,¹ a legendary biography of the betrayer of Christ, with all sorts of pious cogitations. Many of Santa Clara's short sermon-like writings are, however, much more readable now. At first they often seem to be only a rapid fire of witticisms and droll conceits, but they always have a sound moral purpose. The best-known of these writings is the sermon against the Turks, *Auf, auf, ihr Christen*² (1683), which Schiller afterward used in writing the speech of the Capuchin monk in *Wallensteins Lager*.³

The most common and popular type of prose romance in the seventeenth century was the heroic-gallant novel, which bore the reader usually into far-distant lands and times, into the romantic worlds of knightly adventure, the Orient, antiquity, or the old Germanic heroic age, such as we have seen in the case of Lohenstein's *Arminius*. Philipp von Zesen (1619-89), the founder of one of the language associations mentioned above, contributed to this mass of popular stories of pomp and heroes; but he also wrote a psychological novel of seventeenth-century family life, *Die Adriatische Rosemund*⁴ (1645), a work of wide popularity, but dull and untrue to life.

The only man of the age who really saw how much the immediate past offered for literary treatment was Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. Striking boldly out into the current of human life Grimmelshausen described his time with epic truthfulness and in accordance with a well-designed plan. Born about 1625 at Gelnhausen, he fell among soldiers when only a boy of ten, and stayed with them until the conclusion of peace in 1648. Then he seems to have gone off on long journeys, but he finally settled down and died in 1676 at Renchen in Baden,

The Heroic-
Gallant
Novel.

Grimmels-
hausen
(ca. 1625-
76).

¹ *Judas the Arrant Knave.*

² *Wallenstein's Camp.*

³ *Up, up, ye Christians.*

⁴ *Adriatic Rosemund.*

a highly respected village mayor. His heroic courtly novels in the fashionable style were soon forgotten, but those dealing with the people were the forerunners of a new era. The greatest of the latter is *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus*¹ (1668), whose main elements are those of a picaresque novel, or story of an adventurous rogue. This type of novel arose in the tale *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1586), ascribed to the Spaniard Mendoza. Several German versions of various picaresque novels partly adapted to German conditions had appeared even before Grimmelshausen, but his *Simplicissimus* leaves all its rivals far behind. Written in the form of an autobiography whose chief features were undoubtedly taken from the life of the author, it gives an incomparably vivid picture of German life during the second half of the Thirty Years' War. The rude, almost barbarous character of the time makes many details unpleasant to the modern reader, but the story as a whole is told with a rare union of amusing humor and deep seriousness. This is the case especially in the charming forest idyl which describes the hero's boyhood at an old hermit's, the setting of the song *Komm, Trost der Nacht, o Nachtigall*.² Grimmelshausen's style is forcible and yet varied, and the character drawing is masterly. The hero's development from an innocent child into a world-weary man is drawn with an epic breadth and truth. *Simplicissimus* is more than an imaginary figure in a novel; he is a man such as all nations and times have known. Through this universal human element, not through the tremendous historical background alone, *Simplicissimus* ranks far above all German novels before the masterpieces of the eighteenth century.

The fabulous descriptions of travels and adventures called forth parodies as early as the seventeenth century.

¹ *Adventurous Simplicissimus*.

² "Come, solace of the night, oh nightingale!"

The author of one of the best was a Leipsic student, Christian Reuter (born 1665); his *Schelmuffsky* (1696) is a most diverting travesty of such mendacious novels and of the exaggerated manners of would-be gallant townspeople.

Parodies of
Novels of
Travel.

German science and its prose expression rose to remarkable significance in this period. The first and most illustrious exponent of both was Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, who was born in Leipsic in 1646 and died in 1716 in Hanover, where he had resided the greater part of his life. Leibniz was the greatest scholar of his time; he was distinguished as a philosopher, mathematician, historian, and jurist. Most of his works were written in Latin or French, but his essays in German, especially his *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken, betreffend die Ausübung und Verbesserung der deutschen Sprache*,¹ show his affection and solicitude for his mother-tongue. In the essay mentioned he dispelled the prejudice against the use of German in scientific treatises, and pointed the way to the proper cultivation of German prose. The Leipsic professor Christian Thomasius (1655-1728), a vigorous opponent of trials for witchcraft and of the rack used in inquisitions, lectured in German from 1687 on, Latin alone having been used in university lecture-rooms up to that time; he also edited the first German literary periodical. The philosophical teachings of Leibniz were followed in the university at Halle by Christian Wolff (1679-1754), who developed and presented Leibniz's ideas of God, the world, and the human soul, in such a way that these conceptions were more easily and generally understood. Wolff and Thomasius are at the same time the first representatives of rationalism, which, as we shall see, reached its full bloom in the eighteenth century. Through his introduction of

The Prose
of Science.

¹ *Unpresuming Ideas concerning the Use and Improvement of the German Language.*

pietism, which will be discussed presently, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) offered pious Protestants a refuge from the dogmatic orthodoxy of the time. The rallying ground of the pietists was Halle, where August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), Spener's greatest disciple, was a professor in the university.

CHAPTER X

THE IMMEDIATE FORERUNNERS OF CLASSICAL GERMAN LITERATURE. 1700-1748

THE imitative dependence on foreign authors which was characteristic of German writers from Opitz on continued far down into the eighteenth century. The influence of Romance literatures not only remained strong; French classical literature was still more lauded and exalted as a supreme model than ever before. But the domination of French and other Romance standards of literary art was destined to pass away within a few decades. It was to be superseded by the influence of English writers, one of the most important forces in German literature in the eighteenth century.

The earliest conspicuous phase of English influence appeared during the second decade in the establishment of weekly papers which were modelled after the *Spectator* and *Guardian* of Addison and Steele, and devoted both to literary amusement and to the moral and literary education of the people. A vast number of these periodicals followed for a longer or shorter time; those which affected the widest circles were *Die Discourse der Maler*,¹ established in Zurich in 1721 and known as the chief organ of Bodmer and Breitinger, Gottsched's *Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen*² (Leipsic, 1725), and the *Neue Beiträge zum Vergnügen des Verstandes und Witzes*³ (Bremen, 1744), or *Bremer Beiträge*;⁴ the last of these we shall meet again presently.

¹ *Painters' Discourses.*

² *The Sensible Fault-finders.*

³ *New Contributions to the Entertainment of the Intellect and Understanding.*

⁴ *Bremer Contributions.*

The most common type of novel was likewise due to English influence, to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

The "Robinsonaden." The kernel of Defoe's story, the solitary life of a world-worn hero on an island, can be found in the last adventure of Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus*, but German novelists did not realize the possibilities of the theme until Defoe had conceived and presented it. Then they set about their imitations of *Crusoe* and produced countless echoes of it, the so-called *Robinsonaden*. Of these imitations the most original and the only real literary achievement is *Die Insel Felsenburg* ¹ (1731-43) by Johann Gottfried Schnabel (born 1692). The chief characteristics of all these novels is the evident desire of the authors to satisfy popular taste for the strange and foreign, and to express a longing for a return to simple, natural life.

The only genuine poet in Germany in the first decades of the eighteenth century was Christian Günther (born 1695 in Silesia), a man of splendid talents but no balance of character. Weakened by the excesses of his student days and crushed by his father's curse, he died in Jena in 1723, before completing his twenty-eighth year. Günther was very different from the fashionable poets of the time, but not through any conscious opposition to them; he merely had no interest in their soulless art, and wrote as his own feeling and experience prompted. His most brilliant contribution to occasional poetry is his poem on the Peace of Passarowitz (1718), which was concluded between Austria and Turkey at the close of an expedition led by the gallant popular hero Prince Eugene of Savoy. This poem of Günther's, beginning *Eugen ist fort; ihr Musen, nach!* ² is very remarkable for its historical perspective; in this respect it towers over any occasional poem before Klopstock. Günther fought

¹ *The Island of Felsenburg.*

² *Eugene is gone; ye muses, up!*

hard against his passions, but, as Goethe says, "he could not tame himself, and so he lost his hold on life and poetry." His talents never fully matured, and yet his poems (1724) were so fresh and pure in feeling that they were for two decades the most widely read and admired product of German poetry, and were a source of inspiration later to such lyric poets as Bürger and Goethe. With much less poetic light the poet Heinrich Brockes (1680–1747) sought the way back to nature. In his *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*¹ (1721), which suggests the English poet Thomson, he taught German poets how to observe and describe nature with some penetration. He also gave rhythm a freer swing by varying the number of feet in a line of verse.

German literature in general was at a low ebb in the first decades of the eighteenth century. Poetry which was the product of conscious art was losing all connection with real life, and it was inordinately dull and commonplace. With the exception of a few poems like the folk-song *Prinz Eugenius der edle Ritter*² (1717), genuine poetry of the people was hushed completely. The condition of the theatre was still more wretched. Besides the gallant-heroic opera cherished at court, there was chiefly the poetically worthless, bombastic drama of strolling players, in which kings and heroes thundered their worn-out fustian; these were the so-called *Haupt- und Staatsaktionen*, plays which formed the "main" part of a performance and which were staged with great "pomp." With plays of this kind childish impromptu farces were presented as a kind of extra; in these the *Hanswurst*, a counterpart of the English clown and the Italian harlequin, delighted the crowd with his racy jokes.

¹ *Earthly Contentment in God.*

² "Prince Eugene, the pearl of knighthood."

This was the condition of affairs about the middle of the twenties, when Johann Christoph Gottsched determined, like a second Opitz, to reform German literature. Gottsched was born near Königsberg in 1700; from 1724 he was connected with the university at Leipsic, where he died, a professor, in 1766. Gottsched had the best of intentions, but he was without any insight into the nature of poetry. To him its sole object was moral edification, its chief characteristics clearness and common-sense; the use of the imagination he rejected almost entirely. These are the narrow views of his important work *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen*¹ (1730). As Opitz had done a century before, Gottsched recommended the imitation of foreign models, of the French and their disciples in England. He adopted all the rules of the French classic authors without examination, and therefore without seeing that many of these rules were based on a misunderstanding of the poetic theories of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Gottsched tried hardest to reform the stage, first, by rescuing it from the three forms of entertainment mentioned, especially from the coarse harlequinade, and by bringing it under the rule of the classic, that is, the regularly constructed French, drama. In France dramatists held fast to the rules that the supposed time of a play should not exceed twenty-four hours, that the place represented should be one and the same throughout, and that the play should present only one main plot. The French considered these three dramatic unities of time, place, and action Aristotelian, and adopted them as such, although Aristotle really sets up only the unity of action as a law. All three now became law for the German stage, and Gottsched applied them rigidly when he patched up his "model" tragedy *Der ster-*

Gottsched's
Attempt at
Reform.

¹ *An Attempt at a Critical Theory of Poetry for Germans.*

bende Cato ¹ (1732) out of material taken from an English and a French play; it is in Alexandrines, of course, and pretends to be the first classical drama. Besides this, Gottsched edited with his wife's assistance several periodicals and collections of dramas, in order to spread literary taste as he conceived it. The famous actress Karoline Neuber, who was then in Leipsic with her troupe, gave practical assistance to Gottsched's innovations by presenting the plays he commended. For a decade Gottsched was the dictator of German literature. But he persecuted independent poets with the greatest intolerance, and by thus laying himself open to the assaults of younger writers, he fell into a literary controversy which resulted in his downfall. People now unjustly refused to acknowledge his great deserts. Gottsched gave demoralized German drama a form that was worthy and pleasing to cultured readers; he insisted upon correctness, purity, and clearness of language as opposed to hollow bombast and a mixture of German and other languages. With unusual knowledge and patriotic zeal, he first made the forgotten German literature of former times the object of serious study. But Gottsched's path would never have led the Germans to the national literature that was so near at hand, and therefore Lessing's relentless attacks upon his theories had their complete historical vindication.

Gottsched's arrogant dictatorship was first attacked conspicuously by Johann Jakob Bodmer (1698-1783) and Johann Jakob Breitinger (1701-76) of Zurich. The most important of their attacks are Bodmer's *Abhandlung vom Wunderbaren in der Poesie* ² and Breitinger's *Kritische Dichtkunst* ³ (1740). The two Swiss reëstablished the rights of fancy and feel-

His Con-
troversy
with the
Swiss.

¹ *The Death of Cato.*

² *Treatise on the Imaginative and Marvellous in Poetry.*

³ *A Critical Theory of Poetry.*

ing as opposed to Gottsched's arid rules of common-sense; they defended the presentation of the imaginative and marvellous in poetry, and cited, not products of French classicism, but *Paradise Lost* by John Milton (died 1674) as the climax of modern literature. From the time of this controversy, French influence was more and more supplanted by English, and from the latter the Germans learned the way to the creation of real poetry. The Swiss were considerably nearer to an understanding of poetic art than Gottsched was, but the real essence of poetry was by no means clear to them. They, too, laid undue emphasis on moral effect as the ultimate goal of the poet, although they granted that the moral must not be taught insistently; its effect should spring from the pleasure which the reader's imagination would lead him to find in the poetic illustration of the beauty of virtue and morality. Misled by the descriptions of nature in the poetry of Milton and other Englishmen, they shared the delusion, which was not banished until Lessing's *Laokoon*, that painting and poetry may properly treat the same subjects, that poetry is painting in words, and painting is poetry in colors. They thus gave fresh impetus to the craze for long descriptions. The Swiss were also opposed to the use of rime. They objected to it on the ground that the anticipation of a recurrent sound distracted the hearer's mind from the thought contained in a poem, and that the necessity of using a certain word on account of its riming possibilities tended to warp the poet's idea. The Swiss considered rime a mere external ornamentation which was unessential and unnatural. Thus, while Bodmer and Breitinger advanced German poetry, their theories were still crude and narrow. In later years Bodmer performed a wholly worthy service to German literature in publishing editions and new versions of Middle High German poems, specimens of minnesong (1748), *Kriemhildens Rache*¹ (1757), that is, the

¹ *Kriemhild's Revenge.*

second part of the *Nibelungenlied*, and in 1758-59, with Breitinger, a collection of poems by minnesingers. As an epic poet Bodmer was an imitator of Klopstock, as an author of Biblical dramas his predecessor, but along creative lines he is insignificant.

In the controversy between Gottsched and the Swiss, the former was defeated, not only because his theories were false, but also because nearly all the younger poets joined the side which championed the rights of poetic fancy as well as the moral element. The justice of their contentions could be finally proved only by a poetic embodiment of their theories. This proof was given by Klopstock, an ardent partisan of the Swiss, when he published the first three cantos of his *Messias* in 1748. When Gottsched incited his disciples to a furious attack upon this publication, he completed his own destruction.

Among other predecessors of Klopstock besides those mentioned is Albrecht von Haller (born and died in Bern, 1708-77), a deep, manly thinker who rose from scepticism to devout belief, and a pioneer in physiology, anatomy, and botany. Even before Bodmer and Breitinger, he had followed paths of his own in poetry, too, in attempting to rival English poets; as with other men of the time, his chief models were English nature poets, especially Thomson. In the didactic descriptive poem of his youth *Die Alpen*¹ (1732) he first brought out the contrast between civilization and nature which was later a favorite theme of the French philosopher Rousseau and of Schiller. The deep feeling in some of Haller's lyrical expressions of personal experience is highly poetical, for example, in *Doris* and the two poems on the death of his wife Marianne. His thoughtful didactic poems such as *Über den Ursprung des Übels*² (1734), written in rather

¹ *The Alps*.

² *On the Origin of Evil*.

ponderous language, introduced philosophical reflective poetry into German literature and served as a model for Schiller.

Friedrich von Hagedorn (born and died in Hamburg, 1708–54), the opposite and complement of Haller, was the first in the series of admired eighteenth-century fable-writers in Germany; he was followed by Gellert, M. G. Lichtwer (1719–83), Gleim, Lessing, and many others. Hagedorn, however, was particularly fond of jovial social songs and humoristic stories in verse like his *Johann der muntre Seifensieder*.¹ In the fashion of the French, he proclaims a philosophy of life resembling that of the Latin poet Horace, and an enjoyment of life such as praised by Anacreon, the Greek singer of wine and love. His poems of the latter kind strike a chord which reëchoes again and again in German lyrics, in so-called Anacreontic poetry, down to Goethe. In this influence, and in the musical flow of his verses, which are a happy contrast with Gottsched's heavy-footed Alexandrines, lies Hagedorn's significance.

A much deeper and broader influence was exerted by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, who was born July 4, 1715, near Freiberg in Saxony, and died in Leipsic, December 13, 1769. Through the purity of his character and the gentleness of his personality this sickly, timid man became the favorite and the honored pattern of his generation. His writings, like the man himself, are chiefly characterized by earnest religious feeling and gentle humor. His *Fabeln und Erzählungen*,² which appeared in 1746 and 1748, were very soon, with the exception of Luther's Bible, the most widely known book in all Germany and the delight of old and young, high and low. Gellert's fables show the influence of the French fable-writer La Fontaine,

¹ *John, the Merry Soapmaker.*

² *Fables and Tales.*

but they are, nevertheless, a perfect expression of the life of the German middle classes. Many of the fables are little masterpieces of good-natured ironical story-telling, for example, *Die Geschichte von dem Hute*,¹ *Der Blinde und der Lahme*,² *Das Gespenst*,³ and *Die Fliege*.⁴ Gellert's religious feeling appears, of course, most fully and freely in his hymns (1757), many of which are still frequently sung in German churches, *Gott, deine Güte reicht so weit*,⁵ *Die Himmel rühmen des Ewigen Ehre*,⁶ *Mein erst Gefühl sei Preis und Dank*,⁷ *Wie gross ist des Allmächt'gen Güte*,⁸ *Dies ist der Tag, den Gott gemacht*,⁹ and *Jesus lebt, mit ihm auch ich*.¹⁰ Gellert's insipid comedies, such as *Das Los in der Lotterie*,¹¹ were written with moral and sentimental aims; the author says himself that he desired to "start tears rather than laughter"; with these works he established the so-called "lachrymose" drama in Germany. On the other hand his aim was purely moral in the once-admired novel *Die schwedische Gräfin*¹² (1746), the first emotional novel of family life in German; its model was *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson, a literary idol of Gellert's. Lastly, Gellert exerted a very beneficial influence on German epistolary style both by precept and example; he despised the extravagant flourishes common in his time, and insisted upon simple naturalness as the first essential.

Gellert was by no means a reformer by nature, and at first he was a sincere admirer of the poetry of Opitz and Gottsched. However, his natural bent was far more in the

¹ *The History of the Hat.*

² *The Blind Man and the Lame Man.*

³ *The Ghost.*

⁴ *The Fly.*

⁵ "O God, Thy goodness doth extend."

⁶ "The heavens exalt Jehovah's glory."

⁷ "I bless Thee, Lord, Thou God of might."

⁸ "How bounteous our Creator's blessing!"

⁹ "This is the day the Lord hath made."

¹⁰ "Jesus lives, and so shall I."

¹¹ *The Ticket in the Lottery.*

¹² *The Swedish Countess.*

direction of the warm, imaginative feeling of the Swiss than in that of the cold common-sense of Gottsched, who looked down disdainfully on the modest popular writer. The breach between Gottsched and Gellert was completed when the latter and other younger poets collaborated in a periodical which has already been mentioned, the *Neue Beiträge zum Vergnügen des Verstandes und Witzes*, or *Bremer Beiträge*, as it was generally called from Bremen, the place of its publication, although its headquarters were in Leipsic. The journal was established in 1744 and edited by K. C. Gärtner (1712-91). These young writers were all on the side of the Swiss, and they now openly opposed the theories of Gottsched and the *Belustigungen des Verstandes und Witzes*,¹ a periodical founded in 1741 by J. J. Schwabe (1714-84), a disciple of Gottsched. In this group of poets, the *Bremer Beiträge*, also called the Saxon school of poets and the Leipsic poets' circle, Gellert was associated with Rabener, Adolf Schlegel (1721-93) and his brother Elias, Zachariä, the translator J. A. Ebert (1723-95), and others. Klopstock joined the league in 1746. Wilhelm Rabener (1714-71) wrote admirable prose satires in which he made sport of foolish fads in literature and town life. He was a man of unusually clear mind and honest, manly character, and like his friend Gellert, he did considerable service in the development of German sense and feeling. Elias Schlegel (1719-49) wrote poor Frenchified tragedies and weak comedies, but he was a forerunner of Lessing in his dramatic criticism. In this he drew people's attention to Shakespeare, pointed out the difference between English and French drama, justified tragedy dealing with middle-class life, and advised the use of national themes. Unfortunately his best prose work was not published until long after his death, and his influence on the drama of his time was thus

¹ *Diversions for the Intellect and Understanding.*

nullified. Friedrich Wilhelm Zachariä (1726-77) established the burlesque epic as a literary form in Germany in his first and most successful work *Der Renommiste*¹ (1744). In style it is modelled after Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, but in content it is an original and vivid picture of Leipsic student life of the time. The Leipsic poets were intimate friends of several Prussian contributors to the *Bremer Beiträge*, notably Ewald von Kleist and Gleim. The poetry of these Prussians is marked, as we shall see, by its enthusiasm for Frederick the Great.

¹ *The Braggart.*

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT CENTURY OF GERMAN LITERATURE. 1748-1848. THE GENESIS OF THE CLASSICS

It was in the age of Frederick the Great (born 1712, King of Prussia 1740-86) that German literature and German intellectual culture entered into their classical prime. And yet, at first glance, the extraordinary progress of German literature in the eighteenth century seems not to have been due to Frederick at all. His education and ideas of literature were French throughout, and the poetry of his own country never attracted him. When he was young and sensitive to poetic impressions, German literature did not deserve his attention; and when its new day had dawned, he was too old to perceive its merits, or to judge it by any other standards than those of the French classicists which it had rejected. He did, however, in his later years, cherish the warm desire and the confident hope, as he says in his depreciatory essay *De la littérature allemande*¹ (1780), that a great future was in store for German literature, and he himself did not a little to bring it to pass. He showed German poets, indeed, little favor, esteeming only Gellert, but it is possible to consider this indifference a blessing in disguise; it at least permitted literature to develop with all the more independence of court fancies and preferences. Frederick's greater, positive influence lay, as Goethe says, in the fact that "the first true and really vital content of a high order came into German poetry through Frederick the Great and the deeds of the Seven Years' War" (1756-63). For the first time since Luther,

The Influence of Frederick the Great on German Literature.

¹ *Concerning German Literature.*

the German people could call a great hero their own, whether they were subjects of Frederick or not. Their hero had vanquished the French and Russians, and held out victorious against tremendous odds; his fame had reached the most distant nations, and it had raised the despised name of Germany again in honor. Even the most bitter German enemies of Frederick acknowledged this; and many were devoted admirers of him, even when they were jealous of the growth of Prussia. Joyous pride in this prince, whose achievements in times of peace were no less great than those in time of war, brought national consciousness to life again, and this national feeling found expression in literature. It is not only that works by Gleim, Kleist, Lessing, and others received their initial impulse from the deeds of the king. It was the restoration of confidence in themselves that gave Germans the courage to break with French rules and French models, and to seek independently after ideals of beauty. And this self-confidence they owed to Frederick the Great.

Among the intellectual currents of the eighteenth century one of the strongest and broadest was pietism, or the

Pietism. revival of simple piety, of ardent religious feeling, which was started in the seventeenth century by Spener and Francke. The first act of this movement had been the rescue of the Protestant Christian spirit from the squabbles of church parties, from the dogma of arbitrary creeds. It then advanced to the thoughtful contemplation of nature and searching introspection of self which the Christian spirit prompted. German literature bore traces of pietism very soon, but the movement produced, above all, the first great poet of the classical period,

Klopstock. Klopstock (born 1724). Deeply religious by nature and early associations and so at first a thorough pietist, Klopstock was soon fired by national pride, and in this spirit he began his work of liberation.

He it was who consummated the labors of Bodmer and Breitinger and freed the German lyric and epic from the rules of tradition. With unprecedented boldness, he poured into his poetry all the feeling of his warm heart, and found no theme—fatherland, humanity, religion—too exalted for poetic expression. He imparted new life to German rhythm by his imitations of classical metres, and he created a lyrical style of remarkable force and variety.

The ardor of its devotees always threatened to make pietism a one-sided exaltation of feeling, but there was fortunately a restraining power at hand in rationalism, or enlightenment. Like pietism, it was a rebellion against the dogmatic church orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, only with other aims. The pietists wanted to revive long-neglected, pure religious feeling; the rationalists wanted to base all belief, religious or otherwise, on reason. Christian Wolff, a follower of Leibniz and a leader of the movement, expressed the basic ideas of rationalism in such a way that they were easily understood and very alluring; they consequently spread rapidly among the educated classes. "Enlightenment" became the watchword of the times. This was the state of intellectual life when a powerful new impetus arrived from France and England.

In England people had grown weary of the religious strife which had caused so much misery during and after the time of Cromwell (died 1658), and they had been seeking a conciliating form of religious faith. Some of these seekers, known as deists, admitted the value of Christianity as an ethical code of virtues, but the church's dogmatic assumption that it was the final authority, the deists rejected as non-essential and provocative of disputes. In the place of Christianity they set up a so-called "natural religion," whose essence was a simple reverence for nature and for God. This religion

Rationalism.
Its First
German
Form.

English and
French
Freethinkers.

was said to satisfy men, because it was natural and reasonable to worship these two forces, and because such a religion involved a struggle after truth and virtue. The views of the deists and other freethinking English philosophers, such as Locke (died 1704), Shaftesbury (died 1713), and Hume (died 1776), were taken up by French thinkers. Of the latter, Voltaire (died 1778) not only demanded unlimited tolerance for all religious confessions, but he also scorned and ridiculed all ecclesiastical tenets. Montesquieu (died 1755) turned the weapons of rationalism against the modern monarchical state; he subjected the latter's despotism to the most crushing criticism, and established the theory of modern constitutional government in his *Esprit des lois*.¹ Besides these champions of rationalism there was also the *Encyclopédie*, which was founded by Diderot and d'Alembert and began to appear in 1751. This monumental work consisted of countless articles arranged like a dictionary and treating all branches of human knowledge. The spirit of the work is that of rationalistic instruction in matters of religion, morals, and social and political life; some of the writers had even then reached pure materialism and atheism.

The teachings of English and French freethinkers were received in Germany with great enthusiasm. A believer in enlightenment himself, Frederick the Great gave direct aid to the rationalists, and made ideas which emanated from them a controlling power in the Prussian state and church; Voltaire was a guest at Frederick's court for several years, and other rationalists met a cordial welcome there. Through the policy of Frederick, and through its influence elsewhere, the revolutionary political element in French rationalism did not find a counterpart in the German form of the movement. Instead of political rights, German rationalists de-

Later
German
Rationalism.

¹ *Spirit of the Laws*.

manded universal religious tolerance. They hoped for a religion of reason which would be a religion of morality and humanity, and would embrace all mankind; they believed that with a rationalistic explanation of the miracles of the Bible, they could be satisfied with Christianity. This was the turn which rationalism took in Germany. The perils of the movement increased, the more its adherents refused to acknowledge the power of human feeling in religion and life. There were many rationalists of this extreme type, but there were also deep thinkers who endeavored to reconcile reason and religious feeling.

Enlightenment in its noblest form found poetic expression at the hands of Lessing (born 1729), the second great author of the time. Lessing combined within himself, as no other man before him, the ancient and the modern spirit, the scholarly culture of the Renaissance and robust German nationality. He did more than Klopstock, more than any one else, for the spiritual emancipation of Germany. The delusions which clung to the Swiss he dispelled completely, and Klopstock's fight against the imitation of foreign literatures he carried still farther toward victory. Lessing's constructive criticism and his literary example were the guides which led German literature to its summits. Not until Lessing had any one perceived that the essence of perfect art lies in the harmony of content and form. Lessing's perception of this principle of literary art and his illustration of it in his works entitle him to rank as the first German classic author. Aside from the higher standard which he set for German prose, Lessing's greatest service to literature was in the field of drama. He freed his country's stage permanently from the rules of Gottsched and the French, as Klopstock had freed the epic and lyric, and he drew attention to Shakespeare as a model. As Lessing sought the essence of ancient poetry, so Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-68) tried to discover

the essence of ancient art, and thought he found it in the "noble simplicity and quiet dignity" of Greek sculpture. His chief work, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*¹ (1764), was the corner-stone of later art criticism in Germany; his conception of antiquity deeply influenced the painting and sculpture of Europe, especially that of Carstens, Canova, and Thorwaldsen, but most enduringly of all, the poetry of Goethe.

Besides Klopstock, the lyric poet, and Lessing, the critic and dramatist, there was a third great author, the epic poet and novelist Wieland (born 1733). The latter gave the novel and the story in verse genuine artistic value; he adapted his style to his theme, he drew his characters more vividly, and he was more careful in presenting convincing motives for the actions of his characters. He enlarged poetry's range of theme by the importation of mediæval, romantic stories from foreign literatures, and extended the sphere of poetry's influence by winning the interest of the Frenchified German aristocracy. Wieland's clever wit and humor were largely responsible for his great popularity, but many readers were also attracted by his variety of theme and grace of presentation and by his complacent philosophy of life.

Among the collaborators in the French *Encyclopédie* was Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), a man of intense feeling, a philosopher, and a poet. Disgusted by the corrupt morals of his time, he saw in civilization the source of all the evil into which mankind had sunk. He therefore repudiated all prevailing culture with its artificiality and hypocrisy, and preached a return to an ideal, unknown state of pure nature; here all distinctions of class and rank were to be abolished, and the individual, free from the fetters of the modern society and culture which to Rousseau were the reverse of nature, could

¹ *History of Ancient Art.*

develop independently according to the needs and aspirations of his own heart. In these doctrines which Rousseau proclaimed in his treatise *Le contrat social*¹ and in his novels *Émile, ou de l'Éducation*² and *La nouvelle Héloïse*,³ there was both truth and error, but the astounding influence of these works was far more beneficial than injurious. In France, indeed, Rousseau's path led to the horrors of the First Republic, but the joyous message "Return to nature!" was the knell of the unnatural in the education and art, in the state and life of Rousseau's times.

In Germany, faith in the traditional had already been undermined by Klopstock, Winckelmann, Lessing, and

Herder. Wieland, and this generation of pioneers was

now followed by Herder (born 1744), a man of little creative genius, but of the widest power of inspiration. Following Rousseau and carrying on the ideas of his teacher Hamann, Herder despised the unnatural social conventions of his time, and attacked the tyranny of church orthodoxy as well as that of rationalism. In his work in behalf of literature Herder fought against abstract rules, and championed the poet's right to follow inner impulse alone. He showed that the fountain-head of all genuine poetry lies in the unperverted soul of the people, and by presenting perfect embodiments of truly original, spontaneous poetry, which he found in the folk-song and in the Old Testament, in Homer and Shakespeare, he opened to German poets an inexhaustible spring of life. Further, he deepened the German conception of humanity, and he taught the historical study of literatures and mankind.

It was natural that the revolutionizing ideas of the French philosophers, especially of Rousseau, coupled with Herder's bold doctrines, should start a mighty fermenta-

¹ *The Social Contract.*

² *Emile, or Concerning Education.*

³ *A Modern Héloïse.*

tion in the young men of Germany. Oppressed politically and socially by the abuse of authority in many states of the

**The Storm
and Stress.**

empire, they threw themselves with one accord into the movement which is now known as the Storm and Stress. Political liberty, social equality, the exaltation of primeval nature, of genius, of poetic creation without any regard whatsoever for the traditional laws of art—in short, the perfect freedom of the individual, was the ideal and goal of the new generation. Politically, the

**Its Failure
Politically.**

movement soon proved a failure. In the first place, belief in the monarchical form of government had been greatly strengthened through the deeds and virtues of Frederick the Great and through his influence on other rulers. Frederick saw in the ruling prince the first servant of the state, and in consonance with this view he replaced the self-centred absolutism of the French kings with an enlightened absolutism whose one aim was the welfare of the whole state. Not only in Prussia but elsewhere, too, much had been done to abolish unfair discrimination between the classes, and to better the lot of the people in general, so that life was by no means intolerable in all the states of Germany. Another potent factor in the prevention of a political upheaval in Germany was the lack of a strong centralized government which would-be revolutionists might attack. In an empire which was split up into several hundred petty, independent states, and which was a confederation only in name, there could be neither a large concerted opposition to misgovernment nor even the growth of a strong public opinion. Hence, the Storm and Stress whose germs are to be found in rationalism, and which was directly set in motion by the ideas of Rousseau, never advanced beyond a clash of intellects, beyond personal individual conceptions of life, and beyond the literature which gave expression to those conceptions.

In literature, the Storm and Stress was the dominant factor of its time, the seventies and the first part of the eighties. Under its influence the last trace of the Pseudo-Renaissance, which Opitz had started a century and a half before, vanished forever. It was not wiped out by the criticism of a Lessing, but replaced by poetic ventures which were in accord with the spirit of the movement, and which permanently reestablished imagination and feeling in literature. But the "original geniuses" of the Storm and Stress knew no bounds. Just as many of them in their lives scorned both sober morality and the teachings of reason, so in their works they gave free rein to imagination and feeling. Herder's gospel of the freely creating poetic soul they distorted into a worship of unrestrained poetic caprice whose perfect expression they saw, by a strange perversion of judgment, in Shakespeare. Many a gifted man recklessly squandered his talents, but the greatest, Goethe (born 1749) and Schiller (born 1759), survived the dangers of the time. Goethe, above all, brought into German literature the native popular element which Herder had exalted; many of his early poems are perfect reproductions of the spirit and essence of the folk-song, and the dramatic products of his youth are a new and higher form of the German popular drama.

During the same years that the Storm and Stress ran riot, another exaggeration of feeling, sentimentalism, made itself felt in the opposite direction. The chief characteristic of the Storm and Stress was its conscious virility and its impulse to do; but the sentiment and feeling which pietism had engendered, and which much of Klopstock's poetry had tended to nourish, gradually fell into an "abuse of reverie, into a proud sense of isolation, of being misunderstood, of considering one's self the most afflicted of men, and at the same time loving

The Storm
and Stress in
Literature.

Sentimen-
talism.

one's sadness." This degeneration of feeling was accelerated by a twofold English influence, by the works of Laurence Sterne, especially of his *Sentimental Journey*, and by the melancholy, nebulous songs of Ossian, a Celtic bard of the second or third century; a Scotchman James Macpherson professed to have given the works of Ossian in a free rhythmic translation into English prose published in 1760-65. Numerous translations of Sterne and Macpherson's version of Ossian appeared in Germany within a few years. With this new impetus and with the appearance of Goethe's *Werther* (1774), the supreme literary expression of the movement, sentimentalism acquired a strength whose influence was felt for many years in German literature.

The combination of sentimentalism and the spirit of unrestrained genius gave the seventies their literary stamp.

Kant. It was the work of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), an aging professor of philosophy in Königsberg, who had seen the youthful Herder sitting at his feet, to shatter these false ideals and to remake modern intellectual culture. Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*¹ (1781), *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*² (1788), and *Kritik der Urteilstkraft*³ (1790) were the chief instruments in the work of reconstruction. In these treatises Kant denies all claims of subjective, individualistic superiority, the first canon of the Storm and Stress; he lays down with cool deliberation the impassable boundaries of human knowledge; admits the ideas of God, immortality, and free-will as inevitable postulates of reason, and establishes a simple, exalted, complete system of ethics in his categorical imperative, or the unconditional command of duty, which must be obeyed without contradiction and without reservation. The moral effect of Kant's philosophy was

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason.*

² *Critique of Practical Reason.*

³ *Critique of Judgment.*

overwhelming; it gave the death-blow to shallow rationalism, to the exaggeration of feeling of the sentimentalists, and to the eccentricities of the Storm and Stress. Goethe was not deeply influenced by Kant; he had attained to a large understanding of life before the spread of Kant's philosophy, and this he had done chiefly by reason of his sound nature and through the criticism of friends who were mature and who had unusual intellectual gifts. Schiller, however, found salvation from the trials and perplexities of his young manhood in Kant's compelling doctrine of strict self-discipline. After his death, in the time of Napoleon's domination over Germany (1806-13), Kant's ethics and Schiller's Kantian messages to his countrymen were to many Germans a deep source of comfort as well as of strength with which to prepare for the restoration of national spirit. Goethe and Schiller brought German literature to its culmination, in the first place, by a comprehension of the antithesis between the spirit of the ancients and that of their own nation, between art and nature, intellect and feeling, and, in the second place, by fusing these antitheses into unities as no others of their country had ever been able to do. In their masterpieces of literature they furnished a new rallying ground for all who spoke the German tongue; and in this sense they recreated the lost nationality of the German people in spirit long years before it won a stable political form.

Goethe and
Schiller.

CHAPTER XII

KLOPSTOCK AND HIS FOLLOWERS. POETS OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

Klopstock
(1724-1803).
His Early
Years:
1724-51.

FRIEDRICH GOTTLIEB KLOPSTOCK was born July 2, 1724, the son of a lawyer in Quedlinburg. The boy's happy childhood in his native town and near-by country was affected chiefly by his father and his pious grandmother; he commemorated the latter with touching gratitude in his ode *Der Segen*.¹ From 1739 to 1745 Klopstock was at Schulpforta, a school of old and wide reputation established by Duke Moritz of Saxony in the sixteenth century. Here Klopstock received instruction in religion, literature, and the ancient languages. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in the translation by Bodmer (1732), made a deep impression on the young poet, and in his farewell school oration he uttered the hope that he might become a German Milton and sing of the Messiah. In the autumn of 1745 Klopstock began the study of theology at the university in Jena, and there he wrote out a prose outline of three cantos of his *Messias*. The following spring, as German students have always been in the custom of doing from time to time, he changed his university, going now to Leipsic, where Gottsched's prestige was already past, and where the *Bremer Beiträge* was already established. The collaborators in this periodical and other Leipsic poets, including his cousin Schmidt, were Klopstock's closest friends during these later student days; they were the inspiration of his odes *Wingolf* and *An Ebert*.² In 1748 the first three cantos of the *Messias*,

¹ *The Blessing.*

² *To Ebert.*

which Klopstock had meanwhile turned into hexameters, appeared in the *Bremer Beiträge*. The same year Klopstock accepted a position as tutor in Langensalza, where he fell in love with Schmidt's sister Sophie, the "Fanny" of his odes *An Fanny* and *Bardale*.¹ It was a hopeless love, however, and in 1750 Klopstock gladly consented to visit his ardent admirer Bodmer in Zurich. Klopstock tells enthusiastically of the pleasures of this visit in the ode *Der Zürchersee*,² but it was in the end a great disappointment on both sides; dissension was inevitable between the sober host and the gay, high-spirited youth.

In 1751 Klopstock accepted a call to Copenhagen which Frederick V, King of Denmark, extended to him at the suggestion of Count Bernstorff, the Danish Prime Minister, whom Klopstock had met in Zurich; the poet was now assured of a pension for life and could complete the *Messias* at his leisure. In 1754 he entered upon a happy married life with Meta Moller of Hamburg, the inspiration of the poems *An Cidli* and *Das Rosenband*.³ Work on the *Messias* alternated with skating, riding, and long tramps; the winters were spent in Copenhagen, the summers near by in Lingby. But this period of content was suddenly terminated in November, 1758, by the death of Meta. Klopstock devoted the following years to poetry and scientific studies. The death of Frederick V, whom Klopstock eulogized in the ode *Rothschilds Gräber*⁴ (1766), the succession of Christian VII, and the fall of Bernstorff led Klopstock to follow the latter to Hamburg in 1770, and to dedicate to him the first collection of his odes published in 1771.

The Years of
His Prime,
in Copen-
hagen:
1751-70.

¹ A name, "The Lark."

² *The Lake of Zurich.*

³ *The Chain of Roses.*

⁴ *The Graves at Rothschild*, i. e., Roeskilde, a town on the Danish island of Seeland.

After the completion of the *Messias* in 1773 Klopstock added little to his laurels. He journeyed to Karlsruhe in 1774 at the invitation of the margrave Karl Frederick of Baden, stopping on the way with a group of young poets in Göttingen who adored him as their model in poetry and life, and at the home of Goethe in Frankfort-on-the-Main; but in the following year he returned to Hamburg, where he lived henceforth, strong and robust even in old age. His enthusiasm for the French Revolution, which he expressed in the odes *Die États généraux*¹ and *Der Fürst und sein Kebsweib*,² was succeeded by a bitter disappointment at the outcome of French affairs, as he laments in the odes *Mein Irrtum*³ and *Die beiden Gräber*.⁴ Klopstock died on the 14th of March, 1803, in Hamburg. The pomp of his burial in the suburb Ottensen was an imposing expression of the love and veneration which all Germany cherished for him.

The works of Klopstock's predecessors are, in the main, products of the intellect; deep feeling rarely appears in them, and even when it does, a mastery of the language of poetry is missing. Klopstock, inspired by national pride and by a consciousness of his nobility of purpose, gave himself to the world as he was; his poetry is an inevitable, straightforward expression of his own self, the product of a bold fancy and a full heart. Happily for this expression of himself he had remarkable talent in the use and creation of words. Whereas Gottsched had known no difference between the vocabulary of poetry and that of prose, Klopstock made a sharp distinction between the two. He created, as it were, a German poetical language by a conscious selection of refined, melodious words for use in his

His Later
Life, in
Hamburg:
1770-1803.

A General
Estimate of
Klopstock's
Literary
Activity.

¹ *The States-General.*

² *My Error.*

³ *The Prince and His Concubine.*

⁴ *The Two Graves.*

poems. This language of his is distinctly that of poetry, not prose, and at the same time its strength and boldness are as far from the silly affectation of the Second Silesian School as they are from the prosiness of Gottsched and his disciples. Klopstock also benefited the language by adding new compound words and by exercising greater freedom in the construction of sentences and in the arrangement of words within phrases. He reanimated feeling for rhythmical beauty by introducing various ancient metres, especially the hexameter, in the place of the Alexandrine and other rime systems. It is true that at times Klopstock's feeling deteriorates into sentimentality, his poetic flights of fancy fall into bombast, his metrical art is artificial, his choice of expression is overnice; it is also true that he rarely expresses simple feelings simply, but he is nevertheless the greatest German lyric poet between Walther von der Vogelweide and Goethe. He was preëminently a lyric poet, although his most important and comprehensive work, *Der Messias*, pretends to be an epic. Klopstock never made any progress toward a higher form of art in his poetry; from his first appearance on he remained the same with all his faults and merits.

Klopstock's great life-work is *Der Messias*, conceived and begun under the inspiration of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and extended through twenty cantos and

 "Der
Messias"
(1748-73).

 nearly twenty thousand lines. The theme is the redemption of man through the Saviour. The action of the poem begins with Christ's oath to the Father to save mankind, the announcement of this resolve to the angels, and a vision of heaven. In the second canto Satan and his cohorts in hell plan the death of the Saviour, while the third canto brings us to earth and introduces the disciples. The sufferings of Christ are the theme of cantos four to seven, and His death of the next three. The second half of the poem deals with Christ's resurrection and ascen-

sion into heaven. The *Messias* is the first long work of sustained originality in eighteenth-century German literature; here for the first time since Grimmelshausen, a German author broke with the spirit of imitation, and conceived and executed on a large scale with independence and power. This achievement was directly inspired by the life of Klopstock's own nation and by that of his own time. Debarred by tradition and law from participation in public affairs, the great body of the German people led an inner, mental, and spiritual life, and multitudes had turned from the bigoted orthodoxy of adherents of the church to the rapt devotions of the pietists. The *Messias* sprang from the life of the great mass of the people, and it is also an outgrowth of the life which the smaller body of religious enthusiasts led. It is thus distinctly native and national, and it is pietistic. From the ardent faith of pietism arose directly the intense religious feeling of the *Messias*. From the same soil arose the ecstatic reveries of the pietists and those flights of imagination which even still attract the reader of Klopstock's epic. No other poet of the middle of the eighteenth century bears us now into such vast, spacious realms or strikes us with such awe in the presence of the everlasting; no other has such full-sounding, melodious language. An offspring of its time and permeated with a purified, ennobling idealism, the first cantos of the *Messias* made an unprecedented impression throughout Germany. With few exceptions, men failed to see its obvious faults. Its scenes are too deeply shrouded in a poetic haze, its characters remain superhuman, incomprehensible beings, or they are drawn in outlines too vague to be visualized, and the action moves so slowly that the interest is deadened before events happen. The *Messias* is lacking almost entirely in vivid, objective narration; instead, it is overflowing with personal feeling. It is therefore not a genuine epic poem, and

Klopstock remains here, what he always was primarily, a lyric poet. Even before the appearance of the last cantos of the *Messias*, in 1773, the swift course of German literature had led men to see more clearly its author's limitations, but the publication of the first cantos in 1748 marked the dawn of a new era in German literature.

Klopstock's merits as a poet are most obvious in his *Odes*. Like all true lyric poetry, they are essentially occasional poems in the higher sense, that is, they always arise from some definite personal experience, and they present this experience in an aspect that is universal in its appeal. Rich and varied feeling and the powerful expression of feeling lent an effect of perfect novelty to these odes similar to that of the *Messias*. Klopstock celebrates friendship in the odes *Wingolf*, *An Ebert*, *Der Zürchersee*, and *Die frühen Gräber*,¹ love in *Bardale*, *An Fanny*, *An Cidli*, *Das Rosenband*, and *Das Wiedersehn*,² nature in *Die Frühlingsfeier*³ and *Die Sommernacht*,⁴ enjoyment of life in *Der Rheinwein*,⁵ *Der Eislauf*,⁶ *Der Frohsinn*,⁷ and *Winterfreuden*,⁸ poetry in *Die Stunden der Weihe*,⁹ *Die beiden Musen*,¹⁰ *Der Hügel und der Hain*,¹¹ and *An Freund und Feind*,¹² liberty and fatherland in *Hermann und Thusnelda*, *Hermann*, and *Mein Vaterland*.¹³ In almost all his odes there is intense love of God and an awe-struck reverence for divine omnipotence, but this is especially true of *An Gott*, *Dem Erlöser*,¹⁴ and *Psalm*. The form of Klopstock's odes was a striking innovation. With the exception of a few church hymns

¹ *The Early Graves.*

² *Celebration of Spring.*

⁵ *Rhine Wine.*

⁷ *Cheerfulness.*

⁹ *Hours of Consecration.*

¹¹ *The Hill and the Grove.*

¹³ *My Fatherland.*

² *Reunion.*

⁴ *Summer Night.*

⁶ *Skating.*

⁸ *Winter Joys.*

¹⁰ *The Two Muses.*

¹² *To Friend and Foe.*

¹⁴ *To the Redeemer.*

such as the triumphant *Auferstehn, ja auferstehn wirst du*,¹ Klopstock followed the theories of Bodmer and Breitinger concerning rime and rejected it completely. By the use and free imitation of classical strophe-forms, especially those of Horace, Klopstock gave rhythm an unsuspected melodiousness and variety. After the ode *Die Genesung*² written in 1754, he sometimes renounced any fixed norm in strophe and verse, and used the so-called "free rhythm" in which the language, closely following each inner stir of feeling, creates the rhythmical form for itself. His most brilliant example of such poetry is the hymn of praise to nature *Die Frühlingsfeier* (1759). Klopstock's inclination to force everything into the ethereal and intangible often appears in his odes as well as in the *Messias*, and besides this he sometimes uses words in such an arbitrary, novel way that his meaning is incomprehensible. References to Norse mythology, at that time an affectation of German patriotic poets, also constitutes a weakness in Klopstock's poetry; he spoils the enjoyment of many odes on the Germanic past with obscure passages of this description. He did not sing of the deeds of Frederick the Great, because he could not forget the king's low estimate of German literature. His patriotism in the odes on Germany therefore lacks connection with his own times. But a wide popular effect was impossible for his lyrics in general on account of their form; they made an impression only upon educated classes.

Klopstock also tried his talents as a dramatist. His Biblical plays *Der Tod Adams*³ (1757) in prose and two others in iambics were inspired by the example of Bodmer. His patriotic dramas *Hermanns Schlacht*⁴ (1769), *Hermann und die Fürsten*⁵ (1784), and *Hermanns Tod*⁶ (1787),

¹ "Rise again, yes, rise again thou wilt."

² *My Recovery.*

³ *The Death of Adam.*

⁴ *Hermann's Battle.*

⁵ *Hermann and the Princes.*

⁶ *Hermann's Death.*

all in prose with occasional songs, pretend to be a new kind of drama which Klopstock called *bardiet* from the

Klopstock's
Dramas and
Prose
Works.

Latin *barditus* mentioned in Tacitus's *Germania*; Klopstock interpreted *barditus* as "song of bards," but it is not known whether the *barditus* was anything but a battle call or a hymn used in battle, and whether there were any bards among the old Germanic tribes as there were among the Celts. The *bardiet*, in Klopstock's theory, "takes the characters and the chief parts of its general outline from the history of the fatherland, and is never wholly without songs." All these plays of Klopstock's are worthy of mention only as testimonials of his religious feeling or of his patriotic enthusiasm, and on account of various vivid scenes; they are not at all dramatic in presentation. Among Klopstock's prose works the

"Die
deutsche
Gelehrten-
republik"
(1774).

best-known is *Die deutsche Gelehrtenrepublik*; ¹ it contains many original ideas on language and literature which Klopstock proposes as laws for the government of an imaginary union of all German writers. The book is full of absurdities, but various ambitious youths, for example, Goethe and other Storm and Stress poets, were deeply stirred by the warmth with which the revered author defended the rights of poetic impulse against the regulations of an Opitz or a Gottsched, and by the zeal with which he denounced foreign affectations.

No true poet of the time remained immune from the influence of Klopstock's poetry. Wilhelm von Gersten-

Klopstock's
Followers.

berg (1737-1823) was a follower of Klopstock, though he had other models too, writing successively in the style of Hagedorn, Gleim, Klopstock, and Ossian. Gerstenberg's *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur* ² (1766-70), a continuation of critical work by

¹ *The Republic of German Scholars.*

² *Letters on Literary Phenomena.*

Lessing, prepared the way for the conception of Shakespeare held by Herder and the poets of the Storm and Stress. His tragedy *Ugolino* (1768) is a forerunner of the dramas of the same movement. In the *Gedicht eines Skalden*¹ (1766) Gerstenberg repudiated the mythology of the ancients which German writers had formerly used, and substituted Norse mythology. Klopstock adopted this innovation at once, and he was followed in turn by the so-called "bards." The models of the latter were first the Hermann odes and dramas with their semblance of ancient times, and afterward Ossian; but the poetry of the bards soon degenerated into bombastic, nebulous, patriotic songs which were afterward dubbed *Bardengebrüll*, or "bellowing of the bards." The best-known were the bards "Rhingulf," the pen-name of K. F. Kretschmann (1738-1809), and "Sined," or Michael Denis (1729-1800). In religious poetry the Swiss Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801) was a disciple of Klopstock. Bodmer tried in vain to rival the *Messias*. The tender lyrical moods of Old Testament themes and the melodious poetic prose of Klopstock's *Tod Adams* were duplicated by Salomon Gessner (1730-88) of Zurich in his story *Der Tod Abels*² (1758). Gessner had, however, acquired some fame before this time through his graceful *Idyllen* (1756) on imaginary innocent shepherd life. These were a successful revival of the sentimental Arcadian idyl which has already been mentioned; they gave expression to the longing of the time for nature, and spread the good repute of German poetry in France and England. A group of young poets in Göttingen were devoted admirers of Klopstock, but they were also deeply influenced by Herder, and hence will be discussed later.

The names of several Prussian poets are connected with

¹ *Poem of a Scald, i. e., of an ancient Teutonic bard.*

² *The Death of Abel.*

the Seven Years' War. Ewald von Kleist, who was born in 1715, died, a Prussian major, at Frankfort-on-the-Oder

Poets of the
Seven Years'
War.

from a wound received in the Battle of Kunersdorf in 1759. A year after the appearance of the first three cantos of the *Messias*, Kleist published his poem *Der Frühling*;¹ like Klopstock's epic, it is in hexameters, though with an extra initial syllable.

E. von Kleist
(1715-59).

Influenced by Thomson's *Seasons* and endowed by nature with great warmth of feeling, Kleist draws charming pictures of country life. He shows poetic sensibility in the idyl, too, for example, *Irin*, as well as in the fable, such as *Der gelähmte Kranich*.² The delight which Kleist took in praising his native land and his king appears especially in his famous ode *An die preussische Armee*³ (1757), and in the brief epic on patriotism and friendship which he wrote in the midst of war, *Cissides und Paches* (1759). This last work shows the deep influence which Lessing, a close friend of Kleist, was beginning to have on his poetry. Ludwig Gleim (1719-1803) of Halber-

Gleim

(1719-1803).

stadt was loved and esteemed as few men of his generation on account of the assistance which he gave to younger poets; "Father Gleim" he was called universally. An imitator of Hagedorn in Anacreontic poetry, he became a leading representative of this kind of verse along with Johann Peter Uz (1720-96) and Johann Georg Jacobi (1740-1814); the latter's poetry suggests Goethe in beauty of form and in purity of feeling. Gleim's model in fables and short stories was Gellert. Gleim was thus largely an imitator of others, but Klopstock's patriotic odes and his own veneration for the great king aroused in him an eloquence of his own. The eleven war-songs grouped together under the title *Preussische Kriegslieder eines Grenadiers*⁴ (1758) are a vigorous, manly

¹ *Spring*.

² *The Lamed Crane*.

³ *To the Prussian Army*.

⁴ *Prussian War-Songs by a Grenadier*.

glorification of the conspicuous victories of Frederick the Great in the Seven Years' War; the most famous of them are *Die Schlacht bei Prag*, with the opening line *Viktoria! mit uns ist Gott!*¹ and *Die Schlacht bei Rossbach*, beginning *Erschalle, frohes Siegeslied*.² Karl Wilhelm Ramler (1725-98) was a dry versifier, but his patriotic outbursts may be mentioned as continuations of Klopstock's rhythmical innovations. How Lessing and Schubart were inspired by the deeds of Frederick the Great will appear in later chapters.

¹ *The Battle of Prague*: "Victory! God is with us!"

² *The Battle of Rossbach*: "Resound, oh joyous song of triumph!"

CHAPTER XIII

LESSING

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING was born January 22, 1729, at Kamenz, where his father, a capable man in strait-

ened circumstances, was the leading pastor; Lessing (1729-81).
As a Boy and Young Man: 1729-56. "such a good man and withal such a quick-tempered man," Lessing says of him. From 1741 to 1746 Lessing attended the famous

school of St. Afra at Meissen near Dresden, established like Schulpforta by Duke Moritz of Saxony, and there he laid the foundations of his great learning; the rector of the school said of him: "He is a horse that takes double fodder; the lessons that are too hard for others are child's play to him. There is no field of learning that his active mind would not like to explore and would not understand." At St. Afra, Lessing also conceived his first comedy *Der junge Gelehrte*.¹ He was enrolled as a student of theology in Leipsic from 1746 to 1748, but he carried on other studies along with those in theology, especially philology and literature as well as medicine. He also wrote short poems and outlines of dramas, and associated with the journalist C. Mylius and Christian Felix Weisse (1726-1804); a popular dramatist and writer for the young. His acquaintance with the actress Karoline Neuber, Gottsched's friend, led Lessing to translate some French plays for her, and she produced his play *Der junge Gelehrte*, successfully in January, 1748. His intimacy with theatrical people gave Lessing a wide knowledge of the world and of the stage, but his pious parents were much scandalized

¹ *The Young Scholar*.

by such a life, and Lessing had to visit them in Kamenz, from New-Year's to Easter, 1748, and convince them of his accomplishments and good morals. From Leipsic he went to Berlin, stopping en route at Wittenberg for four months, and arriving at the Prussian capital in November, 1748, where he continued his varied studies until December, 1751. He lived by his translations and journalistic work, writing also the comedies *Der Misogyn*,¹ *Die alte Jungfer*,² *Die Juden*,³ *Der Freigeist*,⁴ and *Der Schatz*,⁵ and publishing a well-received collection of lyrics under the title *Kleinigkeiten*.⁶ Returning to Wittenberg, he continued his student life until he took the degree of Master of Arts in December, 1752. He went back to Berlin at once, and now began his friendship with the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, the book dealer Friedrich Nicolai, and the poets Ramler and Gleim. In the course of these years he wrote witty aphorisms, became absorbed in dramaturgical studies, acquired the reputation of a greatly feared critic through his *Vademecum für Herrn Samuel Gotthold Lange*,⁷ and proved his learning by his *Rettungen des Horaz*.⁸ During a sojourn in Potsdam, near Berlin, from January to March, 1755, he finished his first important drama *Miss Sara Sampson*; it created a great sensation. Lessing returned to Leipsic in October, 1755, starting in the following May on a long journey as the companion of a young merchant, but the general excitement in Europe incident to the beginning of the Seven Years' War stopped their tour in Amsterdam.

Again settled in Leipsic, from September, 1756, to May, 1758, Lessing began his close friendship with Kleist, and

¹ *The Woman Hater.*

² *The Old Maid.*

³ *The Jews.*

⁴ *The Freethinker.*

⁵ *The Treasure.*

⁶ *Trifles.*

⁷ *A Manual for Mr. Samuel Gotthold Lange.*

⁸ *Vindications of Horace.*

laid plans for various plays, *Emilia Galotti*; *Kleonnis*, a tragedy in iambics, and *Faust*. He was then in Berlin

His Life in
War Time
and in
Hamburg:
1756-70.

once more, until November, 1760, studying older German literature, for example, Logau's poetry, and the art of fable-writing; his *Fabeln* appeared in 1759. He also wrote during these years his patriotic tragedy *Philotas*. In 1759, in company with Nicolai and Mendelssohn, he established a journal, *Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend*,¹ which inaugurated new methods in literary criticism. From November, 1760, to April, 1765, he acted as secretary to the Prussian General von Tauentzien in Breslau; here he became acquainted with military life, and in association with soldiers and civilians acquired the knowledge of men which fitted him by 1763 to sketch the comedy *Minna von Barnhelm*. He also carried on all sorts of studies, especially that of the ancients, which resulted, notably, in *Laokoon*. In May, 1765, Lessing returned to Berlin by way of Kamenz and Leipsic. The publication of *Laokoon* (1766) did not lead to the office of Prussian Royal Librarian as he had hoped. So before *Minna von Barnhelm*, the first German national drama, was completed and published in 1767, he accepted the post of critic for the newly founded national theatre in Hamburg, and entered upon his duties there in April, 1767, the theatre being opened April 22. The periodical *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*² (1767-69) was started at once, and therewith Lessing began his fight against the domination of French classicism in Germany, and opened the way for the advance and development of German tragedy. When the theatre was forced to close in November, 1768, on account of the indifference of the public, Lessing was again oppressed by the lack of means. Before he found another position he continued his study of ar-

¹ *Letters Concerning the Most Recent Literature.*

² *Hamburg Dramaturgy.*

chæology, and on the basis of it wrote his crushing reply, *Briefe antiquarischen Inhaltes*¹ (1768–69), to the persecutions of a clique of scholars headed by the philologist Klotz in Halle. With great self-sacrifice he also devoted himself at this time to caring for the family of a deceased friend, König.

In April, 1770, at the recommendation of the hereditary prince Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand of Brunswick, Lessing became the librarian at Wolfenbüttel, for many years the residence of the Dukes of Brunswick. In spite of the meagre salary he assumed the debts of his father (died 1770), and became engaged in 1771 to König's widow, Eva. Besides other works on literature, there appeared in 1771 *Anmerkungen über das Epigramm*,² in 1772 the first German tragedy that can be reckoned as a classic, *Emilia Galotti*, and *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Literatur aus den Schätzen der herzoglichen Bibliothek*,³ and in 1774, 1777, and 1778 the sensational *Fragmente eines Ungenannten*,⁴ rationalistic treatises written by the deceased Hamburg professor Samuel Reimarus. In February, 1775, Lessing journeyed via Berlin to Vienna, accompanying Prince Leopold of Brunswick through Italy from April to December, and arriving in Wolfenbüttel again in February, 1776. After an increase of salary and the acquirement of the title of Court Councillor he was at last married in October, 1776, to Eva König. But their happiness was brief; Eva and her new-born son died in January, 1778. The few remaining years of Lessing's life were shrouded in gloom. His dispute with a Hamburg clergyman, Goeze, about the *Fragmente* harassed Lessing and embittered him still more, but in spite of all, he accomplished

His Last
Years. Li-
brarian at
Wolfenbüttel:
1770–81.

¹ *Letters of Antiquarian Import.*

² *Notes on the Epigram.*

³ *Contributions to History and Literature from the Treasures of the Ducal Library.*

⁴ *Papers by an Anonymous Author.*

in these last years his noblest poetical achievement, *Nathan der Weise*¹ (1779), a dramatic poem in iambs, celebrating the brotherhood of man, devotion to God, and tolerance. In 1780 Lessing set down his philosophical testament in the treatise *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechtes*.² Long since sickly and ailing physically, but still unbroken mentally, Lessing was attacked by a stroke of apoplexy while on a sojourn in Brunswick, and died shortly after on the 15th of February, 1781, at the age of fifty-two. He was buried in Brunswick in the church-yard of St. Magnus.

A passionate love of truth, indefatigable energy and joy in work, and rare acumen made Lessing an unresting investigator and thinker, a great scholar, and a pioneer in criticism. Macaulay called him "the greatest critic of Europe." He never rested until he had crushed the wrong which he was attacking and had established in its place what he considered the right. An unyielding enemy of error and falsehood, he struck without mercy wherever he saw or thought he saw either. He was sure of his ground in three fields, classical philology, æsthetics, and theology. Free from the delusion of many rationalists that all the possibilities of human cognition were already exhausted, he, chiefly, developed those ideas of rationalism which led to the best in German poetry and philosophy. In his sincerity of conviction and his mastery of style lies the secret of Lessing's effect upon his countrymen. Together with his clearness and plasticity of expression, he also shows a remarkable command of popular picturesque language. But he was not only the greatest critic of his time; he wrote original works of permanent value as well. He says indeed, at the end of his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, that if his original works contained anything that was tolerable, he owed it solely

Lessing's
General
Characteris-
tics.

¹ *Nathan the Wise.*

² *The Education of the Human Race.*

to criticism. It is moreover true that Lessing did not possess the imagination or ease in characterization which the greatest authors have. He worked slowly, often laboring long until he gave the image before him its final form. On the other hand, the greatest clearness of intellect alone could never produce a *Minna von Barnhelm* with all its freshness and vitality. Lessing was able to utilize his minute knowledge of men in the creation of characters who are true to life, and he could experience within himself their psychological changes; this twofold gift made him a genuine dramatist. We may therefore reckon him among the leading original authors of his country, in spite of his doubts of his creative ability. But he was conscious of his limitations, and as a creative writer he essayed almost exclusively the drama. As a critic and as the author of the first distinctly national drama, he exerted an immeasurable influence on the development of German literature.

Of all German authors Lessing was the first who could write on theoretical, scientific subjects with fine discrimination and depth of thought, with profound learning and originality. His *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters*¹ (1750), edited together with Mylius, are experiments in criticism rather than anything more. But Lessing's reviews under the title *Das Neueste aus dem Reiche des Witzes*² (1751), which first appeared in the supplement of a Berlin newspaper, show this author of twenty-two years far superior to other contemporary critics. Absolutely independent in his attitude toward literature, he spares Gottsched's theories as little as the errors and weaknesses of the Swiss Bodmer and Breitinger; he also recognizes the faults of Klopstock as well as his greatness. The *Rettungen des*

Lessing's
First
Critical
Works.

¹ *Contributions to the History and Advancement of the Theatre.*

² *The Latest from the Realm of the Understanding.*

*Horaz*¹ (1754), a model in its clear, attractive treatment of a learned subject, refutes the low opinion of Lessing's time concerning the morals and character of the Roman poet. The *Vademecum für Herrn Samuel Gotthold Lange*² (1754) established Lessing's fame; the stinging wit of this treatise destroyed forever the illegitimate renown of an ignorant vain translator of Horace's odes. The treatise *Abhandlungen über die Fabel*³ (1759) discusses the character of the fable from a new stand-point, but not always convincingly; Lessing recalls classical models and demands epigrammatic brevity for the fable as opposed to the broad epical style of Gellert, and considers the presentation of a moral lesson the object of the fable. His illustrative examples of his theories are clever in content and expert in form. Much more importance, however, is to be ascribed to Lessing's part in the *Briefe die*

The "Literaturbriefe" (1759-60).

*neueste Literatur betreffend*⁴ (1759-60), or, as the collection is briefly called, *Literaturbriefe*,⁵ which he published with the collaboration of Mendelssohn and Nicolai. These "letters," which pretend to have been addressed to an officer wounded in the Battle of Zorndorf, are keen, sweeping criticisms of contemporary literary events. Bad translators, shallow moralists, and warped pedagogues are scourged in turn. In the famous seventeenth letter, which also contains a fragment of Lessing's *Faust* drama, the limitations of Gottsched's theatrical innovations are exposed, and "the masterpieces of Shakespeare" are held up as models instead of French dramas. In other letters Wieland's sanctimonious early works and his insipid dramas are sharply criticised, Klopstock's odes and *Messias* are discussed with

¹ *Vindications of Horace.*

² *A Manual for Mr. Samuel Gotthold Lange.*

³ *Essays on the Fable.*

⁴ *Letters Concerning the Most Recent Literature.*

⁵ *Literature Letters.*

discriminating appreciation of the good and bad, and the forgotten epigrams of Logau are warmly commended.

Lessing's next work in criticism, *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*,¹ was revolutionizing

in its effect on German literature. Although
"Laokoon" (1766). Its starting-point. unfinished, only the first of the three parts

planned ever appearing, it is one of the most important books in the language. Its starting-point is a comparison which the art critic Winckelmann made between the representation of the Trojan priest Laocoön in Virgil's *Æneid* and that in a Greek marble group now preserved in the Vatican. Lessing agrees with Winckelmann that the mouth of the marble Laocoön is not opened wide enough to emit a shriek such as Virgil's priest uttered. Winckelmann, however, asserted that the ancients did not express their pain, and that the sculptor intended to represent a lofty, self-contained soul. Lessing, on the other hand, proves that the Greeks did express their pain very freely. The sculptor did not represent Laocoön in the moment of most intense pain, because beauty was his aim; and he therefore chose a moment of lesser suffering, in order that the features of Laocoön might not be hideously distorted and unbeautiful. Virgil tells of Laocoön's shrieks, but he does not tell of them alone; other phases of Laocoön's character, which soften the effect of his cries of pain, are also treated, and thus the total impression which the reader receives of Virgil's priest is that of a noble, manly spirit no less than that which the spectator receives from the marble group. This is Lessing's reply to Winckelmann, but *Laokoon* was written with a very much larger purpose than this.

Lessing aims, first, to establish a distinction between the medium of expression used by painting and sculpture on the one hand, and that used by poetry on the other,

¹ *Laocoön, or Concerning the Boundaries of Painting and Poetry.*

and, then, to mark the difference in the themes of these arts arising from the difference in medium. After setting

**Its Distinc-
tions between
Art and
Poetry.**

up pure beauty as the aim of the artist, Lessing demonstrates that the fine arts by the use of canvas or stone express themselves in space; poetry's medium, however, is articulated sounds which succeed one another in time. The former can therefore express only coexisting objects or bodies; the latter can express only those things which follow each other consecutively in time, namely, actions. Bodies and their perceptible attributes are the subjects appropriate to the fine arts, actions are the appropriate subjects of poetry. A painting or statue can express action only by suggestion, by means of bodies; poetry can convey the notion of a body only by suggestion, by means of action. The moment of an action which the fine arts choose to represent must be the one which is most suggestive; that attribute of a body which poetry refers to must be the one which gives us the clearest idea of the body. The poet must refrain from description; he cannot vie with the artist in painting. Even if Lessing's conception of fine art as the art of the physically beautiful is narrow, he brilliantly proves the truth of his theory of poetry by means of Homer. The Greek poet is content with only a single vivid epithet in representing a body, or he conveys the idea of a body solely through action, as in the case of Helen; he does not analyze her beauty, he tells us with incomparably greater effect how the sight of her affected even the old men of Troy. In order to realize the tremendous value of Lessing's treatise we must remember the confusion

Its Effect.

which prevailed before its appearance. People thought that painting and poetry corresponded to each other perfectly; that what one could put on canvas the other could put in verse. Consequently, poetry had been afflicted with a mania for description, and the fine arts had

committed to an enduring form moments which are tolerable only to a passing glance, and by adding allegorical symbols to their representations of men and women, they had indicated attributes which ought to be expressed in face or bearing. These two currents in the taste of his time, descriptive poetry and allegorizing art, Lessing checked, and later writers of his country observed the distinction which he made between the spheres of poetry and art.

Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*¹ heralded new tidings of not less importance. At first sight, it seems only a series of fifty-two reviews of plays performed in Hamburg, but it is in fact a continued investigation of the character of the drama, especially of tragedy. Starting out from Aristotle's theories of the drama, Lessing finds the essence of tragedy in the spectators' sympathy with the situation of the tragic hero and their fear for the outcome. Lessing says, further, that the action of the play must arise naturally from the combination of external conditions involved and the characters of the persons represented. Of the three unities of time, place, and action, he thinks only the last to be indispensable, and proves that the French maintenance of all three was based on a misunderstanding of Aristotle. In the remainder of the *Dramaturgie* he justifies tragedies based on events within the experience of the middle classes, and makes acute observations on accurate depiction of life, delineation of character, and kindred subjects. Lessing does not intend to dictate new rules to the poets; he desires, first, to rescue them from the false, and to assert and champion the demands on the dramatist which arise of themselves from the nature of the drama. With these ends in view, he condemns the acted plays of Voltaire and the two Corneilles and others. He opposes

"Hamburgische
Dramaturgie"
(1767-69).

¹ *Hamburg Dramaturgy*.

them also because they made the rise of an independent, national theatre in Germany impossible. He refers to Shakespeare again, and with increased emphasis, as the proper model of the modern dramatist. Literary æsthetics has now outstripped Lessing in many points, but the historical and national value of his *Dramaturgie* remains; it overthrew erroneous theories in Germany, and it laid the foundation of a new German drama.

Lessing's later critical works, however sound, are of little importance as compared with the effect of the last two mentioned. Another work in the form of letters, *Briefe antiquarischen Inhalts*¹ (1768-69), addressed to the unscrupulous, superficial philologist Professor Klotz in Halle, is a classic example of philological polemics; it was a revelation of Klotz in his real character as a scholar and man, and it was his ruin. The beautiful little treatise *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet*² (1769) also arose from this same literary feud. The acute *Anmerkungen über das Epigramm*³ (1771) may also be mentioned. Lessing was forced into a number of theological discussions by attacks on the freethinking *Fragmente eines Ungenannten*⁴ (1774-78), sometimes called *Wolfenbüttler Fragmente*,⁵ which he had edited and published. In these disputes Lessing defends the rights of free investigation with all his might; his most famous rejoinder is the *Anti-Goeze* (1778), a pamphlet addressed to the Hamburg pastor Goeze who was Lessing's most important and most vehement opponent. The last critical work of importance by this unresting seeker after truth is the religious-philosophical testament

Lessing's
Last Criti-
cisms and
Controver-
sies.

¹ *Letters of Antiquarian Import.*

² *How the Ancients Presented Death.*

³ *Notes on the Epigram.*

⁴ *Papers by an Anonymous Author.*

⁵ *Wolfenbüttel Fragments.*

*Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechtes*¹ (1780); its calm, wise philosophy is tinged with the light of that eternal peace into which Lessing was soon to enter.

Lessing wrote a number of pretty Anacreontic poems, fables in prose, and biting epigrams, but aside from these unimportant by-products, his creative work is dramatic in form. Among numerous early attempts in comedy are *Der junge Gelehrte*² the embodiment of personal observation and experience, *Die Juden*³ a play on religious tolerance, and *Der Misogyn*⁴; their most conspicuous merit, as compared with the main body of contemporary drama, is their lively dialogue in easy, natural prose. They were followed in 1755 by the three-act drama *Miss Sara Sampson*, the first tragedy of middle-class life on the German stage. Sara Sampson has been enticed from home by the libertine Mellefont, but they are discovered at an inn by Mellefont's former mistress Marwood. Failing to win back her old lover, and hearing that Sampson is willing to forgive his daughter, Marwood poisons Sara, and Mellefont stabs himself. Inspired by Richardson's novels and Lillo's play *George Barnwell, or the Merchant of London*, Lessing here broke with the preconception of Gottsched and the French that serious drama could deal only with kings and heroes, and presented the universally human, tragic passions of people from ordinary walks of life; at the same time, he rose above the merely pathetic which had formed the content of Gellert's "lachrymose" comedies. Lessing also paid no heed to the notion that tragedy could be written only in Alexandrines; as in his English models, the dialogue is in prose. The English names of the characters, instead of the traditional classic or French names, are another reminder of Lillo and Richardson. The

¹ *The Education of the Human Race.*

³ *The Jews.*

² *The Young Scholar.*

⁴ *The Woman Hater.*

motivation of the action is sometimes very weak, but the psychological evolution of the characters, especially of Mellefont, marks a great advance. The one-act tragedy *Philotas* (1759), written in concise prose, is laid in ancient times; the captive Macedonian prince Philotas kills himself lest his father make a disadvantageous peace in order to ransom him. Lessing strives here after classical simplicity, but his drama is pervaded by the heroic spirit of its author's time, the spirit of self-sacrificing patriotism which had been aroused in Prussia by Frederick the Great.

In the comedy *Minna von Barnhelm oder das Soldaten-glück*¹ Lessing reproduced not only the spirit of his time, but a fragment of contemporaneous life as well.

"Minna von
Barnhelm"
(1767).

Goethe describes the play as "the most direct outgrowth of the Seven Years' War, of perfect north German national content, the first theatrical production based on important events in contemporary life." Lessing sketched *Minna* in 1763 and published it four years later. Tellheim, a Prussian major in the Seven Years' War, won the love of a Saxon heiress Minna von Barnhelm by generous, humane treatment of her country-people during the war. At the conclusion of peace, however, his superiors ascribed his humanity to bribery and dismissed him from the army. Commanded by his sense of honor to give up his betrothed, Tellheim fled to Berlin without giving Minna any information concerning himself. When the play opens he is living there in a small hotel; he is so reduced financially that he pawns his engagement ring with the landlord. Meanwhile Minna has by chance alighted at the same inn, and when the landlord shows her the ring she immediately redeems it and has Tellheim summoned. He refuses, however, to let her throw herself away on a man without reputation or means.

¹ *Minna von Barnhelm, or Soldier's Fortune.*

Minna then resorts to strategy. She bids her maid inform Tellheim that she has been disinherited by her uncle on account of her engagement to him. Tellheim succumbs at once, his energy and his joy in life are born again at the prospect of caring for his beloved; but Minna, in order to make her victory complete, refuses him, and returns the ring which she has redeemed. When a warrant from the king removes the blot on Tellheim's reputation, and restores him to his former position, Minna vows again that she will never take back the ring she has given him. But Tellheim now discovers that it is his own ring which he pawned with the landlord, and the play ends happily. *Minna* is the first masterpiece of the German stage and a comedy which later times have never quite equalled. It is a national play in various aspects, in the place and time of the action, Germany, 1763, in the truthful depiction of German life and manners, and in the sturdy German spirit of the whole play. Furthermore, while writing *Minna*, Lessing had in mind the ruptures which the Seven Years' War had caused between different states of the empire, and the union of the Prussian major and the Saxon heiress was intended as an example of the concord and harmony which Lessing, like many others, desired to see established between all the states of Germany. The artistic construction of the plot, the grace and naturalness of the dialogue, and the alertness of the characters are among the beauties of *Minna*, but the strongest charm of all is that exerted by the subtle mixture of jest and earnest. Lessing's expert use of light and shade raises the comedy to a plane of its own. The 30th of September, 1767, when *Minna von Barnhelm* was first produced, in Hamburg, was the birthday of German national drama.

As in comedy, so, too, in tragedy, Lessing presented his nation with its first classic, *Emilia Galotti*, a play which he entirely rewrote in the winter of 1771-72 from a sketch of

1757. Like *Miss Sara Sampson*, it deals with middle-class life. Emilia Galotti is about to marry a Count Appiani, but the Prince of Guastalla, who has become enamoured of her, desires to frustrate the marriage. His chamberlain Marinelli engages bandits to waylay the carriage containing the bridal pair; Appiani is shot, and servants of the prince, pretended rescuers, carry Emilia off to a secluded country-seat. A former mistress of the prince, Orsina, reveals the plot to Emilia's father Odoardo. Believing that there is no other way of saving his daughter from shame and ruin, Odoardo stabs her. The play is, evidently, based on the Roman story of Virginia, but it is a play of modern times and conditions, and there is no suggestion of the popular insurrection and revolution which Virginia's death incited. Lessing left the action on Italian soil, but the conditions portrayed, the insolence with which corrupt court circles broke up the family life of defenceless, honorable citizens, prevailed not only in the Italian states of the time. The dramatist was reflecting with profound moral indignation such conditions as were prevalent in Germany, too, and thus he created a national German tragedy. The truth of Lessing's picture was felt by all his readers, and the play had a deep effect. This effect was further enhanced by the simple but intense action, the fine characterization, and the terse language. *Emilia Galotti* is Lessing's poetic illustration of the laws of tragedy which he laid down in his *Dramaturgie*. Twelve years later it found an echo in Schiller's impassioned early tragedy *Kabale und Liebe*.¹

Lessing's last and, in some respects, greatest original work is *Nathan der Weise*,² written between November, 1778, and the beginning of April, 1779. When the right to publish without submission to the censor was taken away from Lessing on account of the disputes about the *Frag-*

¹ *Cabal and Love*.

² *Nathan the Wise*.

mente, he "resolved to see whether he would be allowed to preach undisturbed from his old pulpit, the stage," and wrote *Nathan*. He indicated by the subtitle, "Nathan der Weise" (1779). "a dramatic poem," that he did not intend to write a play strictly in accord with rigid rules; and therefore, avoiding dramatic effects deliberately, he presupposes a large part of the action affecting his characters as having taken place at a time antedating that of the play. The plot of *Nathan* is comparatively unimportant; the drama is one of ideas, not of action. *Nathan* was to be a campaign document in behalf of the gospel of enlightenment and religious tolerance, as well as a poetic expression of profound religious conviction. For this purpose Lessing introduces adherents of the three monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism; and through their rise above confessional differences in their attitude toward life and each other, as well as through a parable which the Jew Nathan relates, Lessing teaches the lessons of tolerance and brotherly love. Palestine and the period of the Third Crusade, about 1190, were chosen as the place and time of the action in accordance with the chief source of the play, one of the first stories in Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, and because the three religions were contrasted most vividly there and at that time. Lessing also followed the same source in giving intellectual superiority to the Jew, the representative of the most down-trodden religion, but he did not wish to give it to the Christian, because he was writing for the mock Christians who considered themselves by the mere fact of their religious confession superior to the members of any other faith. The three leading characters are, however, not strictly orthodox members of their various creeds. All three are rather devotees of a more or less purified, universal religion of reason and humanity, and are distinguished much more clearly by their age and character

than by their faith; thus, their final entrance into perfect common understanding and harmony is well motivated and convincing. Nathan, the chief mouth-piece of the poet, and a man who is devoutly inspired by genuine love of humanity, is a thoroughly noble character in every aspect; so, too, are the big-hearted, manly Mohammedan Saladin and two Christians, a youthful, impulsive Knight-Templar and a monk who is an incarnation of simple piety. *Nathan* is a finished poetic expression of deistic-rationalistic doctrines in their most purified form. Its message of brotherly love and humble piety agrees perfectly with the teachings and spirit of true Christianity. The lofty thought and the splendid character drawing are matched by the grace and warmth of the simple, direct language of the play. The unrimed iambic line of five feet in which *Nathan* is written became through Lessing's example the chosen metre of German classical drama.

The Berlin rationalist Friedrich Nicolai (1733-1811) was conspicuous and influential as the editor of the periodical *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*¹ and as the author of the novel *Sebalduß Nothanker*, but he failed in his attempt to prove himself the heir of Lessing in criticism. Others were much more akin to Lessing, especially in their religious-philosophical views, Lessing's Jewish friend Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), the author of *Phädon oder über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele*,² the young patriot Thomas Abbt (1738-66), whose chief work was *Vom Tode fürs Vaterland*³ (1761), and Christian Garve (1742-98). Lessing's style was the model of the rationalistic writer Jakob Engel (1741-1802), the editor of the weekly paper *Der Philosoph für die Welt*⁴

Lessing's
Coworkers
and First
Followers.

¹ *Universal German Library.*

² *Phædon, or Concerning the Immortality of the Soul.*

³ *Concerning Death for the Fatherland.*

⁴ *A Philosopher for Everybody.*

and the author of the successful little novel *Herr Lorenz Stark*. Lessing is also suggested in the manly anti-sentimental spirit and in the plain, vigorous language of the historian Justus Möser (1720-94) of Osnabrück, who is famous for his *Osnabrückische Geschichten*¹ and *Patriotische Phantasien*.² Lessing's friend Ewald von Kleist has already been mentioned.

¹ *True Stories of Osnabrück.*

² *Patriotic Fantasies.*

CHAPTER XIV

WIELAND. HERDER. THE HAINBUND. THE STORM AND STRESS

CHRISTOPH MARTIN WIELAND was born September 5, 1733, the son of a poor clergyman in the village of Oberholzheim in Württemberg, but in 1736 the family moved to the near-by town Biberach, and here the poet received his early education. The influences which first surrounded him, both in school and home, were deeply pietistic. After studying in Erfurt for a year, Wieland entered the university at Tübingen in 1750, where he devoted himself to the study of law. From 1752 to 1759 he lived at Zurich, at first as a guest of Bodmer, whose admiration for Klopstock's poetry was hardly greater than his young friend's. Under the spell of this enthusiasm Wieland wrote numerous pietistical works, which Lessing sharply ridiculed. About 1758 Wieland forsook the "seraphic" spheres of his adored model and descended to weak, watery tragedy. From Zurich he went to Bern, residing there for a year, and then returned to Biberach, where he became a town councilman in 1760. He now extended his knowledge of freethinking English and French writers, and began the first comprehensive German translation of Shakespeare. His original works of this period consist largely of very sensual stories which are in general type the direct opposite of his first attempts in literature, but before the end of the sixties he had given in *Agathon* and *Musarion* convincing evidence of his possession of laudable ideals. In 1769 Wieland was appointed to a professorship in the university at Erfurt, but his novel

Wieland's
Life
(1733-1813).

on the education of princes, *Der goldene Spiegel*¹ (1772), soon called the attention of the Duchess Anna Amalia of Saxe-Weimar to him, and in 1772 he received and accepted a call to Weimar as tutor to the hereditary prince Karl August. In 1775 Wieland was pensioned, and from this time on, esteemed and beloved by all, he lived almost continuously in Weimar or on his near-by estate at Ossmannstedt. His time and mind were occupied by many interests, especially by the composition of numerous poems and prose works, and from 1773 on by his duties as editor of the popular monthly *Der teutsche Merkur*.² Wieland followed the swift course of contemporary world events with political intelligence and patriotism, and, despite his own achievements, he ungrudgingly acknowledged the supremacy of Goethe and Schiller. He died in Weimar January 20, 1813, and was buried on his estate. Goethe delivered a masterly funeral oration in his honor.

The most striking characteristics of Wieland as an author are his great epic talent, his broad culture, his serene philosophy of life, and his ingratiating, sprightly style. In the combination of these gifts and attainments lies the explanation of his influence throughout his country, but especially on the literary education of the nobility and higher middle classes of south Germany. For a time he is wholly under the influence of Klopstock; later they are the opposites of each other. As compared with the poet of the *Messias*, Wieland is the apostle of sensuous beauty and of the manifold emotions of the erring human heart. Thus, like Klopstock, but in a different way, he assisted in freeing heart and fancy from the restraint which German tradition had laid upon them. In addition to this, he gave more smoothness and finish to style in prose and verse, and he restored rime, by his expert use of it, to the place of honor which had been

The Chief
Features of
Wieland's
Work.

¹ *The Golden Mirror*.

² *The German Mercury*.

denied to it by Klopstock. Wieland's leading works are exclusively epical, largely conceived and rich in events, whether the medium be prose or verse. This epic quality is especially conspicuous in the stories which first disclosed to German readers the romantic world of fairies and knights. Taking his themes from mediæval French and Oriental romances, and following the style of the Italian poet Ariosto, he became for Germany the creator of the semi-ironical romantic epic. We may regret that the scenes of many of his prose novels are laid in the Orient or ancient Greece, instead of in his native country and in modern times, but Wieland nevertheless strengthened and elevated the German novel. He turned it away from pedantry and merely ephemeral content to the treatment of deep psychological questions and to a more finished presentation of the themes involved. Instead of resembling Richardson's and Gellert's personifications of vice and virtue, his characters are thoroughly human mixtures of good and bad. Wieland also won a large reputation as a proficient translator of classical authors, especially of his kindred Lucian. His translation of Shakespeare (1762-66), twenty-one dramas in prose and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* in the metre of the original, was the standard German version until the appearance of Schlegel's translation in 1797.

Of Wieland's many writings the earliest notable ones are *Agathon* (1766-67) and *Musarion* (1768), both written after Wieland had won his independence of Klopstock, and after he had turned from the frivolous wanton stories of his second period.

Musarion, which derives its title from the name of the heroine of the story, celebrates a victory of true love over brooding embitterment and coarse sensuality. It is a clever poem, epic and didactic in style. The old Greek world in a very modern form is the scene of action in

Wieland's
Greatest
Works.

Musarion as well as in *Agathon*. The latter is the first important psychological novel in German; its convincing description of inner change and growth of character set a new, commanding standard in German novel-writing. Of Wieland's other novels the most interesting is *Die Abderiten*,¹ which was begun in 1773 and finished in 1780; it is a witty satire on German provincialism and sham culture in a Greek setting. Wieland's best stories in verse were written, like *Die Abderiten*, during his first decade in Weimar. The soundest in morals and the ripest in art is the strictly epical *Geron der Adlige*² (1777), in which Wieland reintroduced the saga of King Arthur into Germany. Its plot centres around a struggle of loyal friendship and manly honor against passion. The richest in thought and ad-

"Oberon" venture and the most famous of all Wieland's (1780).

poetical works is the epic *Oberon* (1780), a romantic heroic poem of twelve cantos, written in a very freely constructed strophe of eight lines. The chief source of *Oberon* was a résumé of an old French story about the young knight Huon of Bordeaux. Having incurred the unjust anger of Charlemagne, Huon is compelled to make a journey to the Orient, to secure from the Caliph of Bagdad four of his jaw teeth and a handful of hair from his beard; Huon is also to kiss the Caliph's daughter Rezia and claim her as his betrothed. Huon accomplishes the hazardous mission successfully and starts homeward with Rezia. On the way they fall before the temptation of passion, but they expiate their sin by bravely overcoming a host of dangers and trials, and thus, in the end, they prove their faithfulness. Into this web of Oriental and chivalric ideas threads of elf life were woven which are known to English readers through Shakespeare's *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The elf-king Oberon has quarrelled with his consort Titania, and, according to his vow, they

¹ *The People of Abdera.*

² *Geron the Noble.*

can be reconciled only when a mortal couple remains true in the most bitter trials. Huon and Rezia, whom he aids and protects, are the pair on whose fidelity he makes his own and Titania's fate dependent. The steadfastness of the two young lovers leads at last to the reconciliation of the king and queen, and Huon arrives safely at home with his bride. Thus, the main theme of the poem is the triumph of a brave heart over physical perils and over the weakness of the flesh. By making the happiness of the elf-king dependent upon the faithfulness of the earthly lovers, and by making Huon and Rezia dependent upon Oberon's aid, two themes are so combined as to form a thoroughly symmetrical, compact whole. Goethe called Wieland's epic a masterpiece of poetic art and sent the poet a laurel wreath.

Wieland's narrative poems and his novels called forth a troop of imitators of very inferior talent; they usually turned his sensuousness and wit into lasciviousness and silly ribaldry, his interesting discussions into shallow chatter. Wieland had one disciple, however, Karl Musäus (born 1735 in Jena, died 1787, a professor in Weimar), who was a clean, high-minded man.

Wieland's
Direct
Influence.

Musäus's chief work, *Volksmärchen der Deutschen*¹ (1782-86), is a collection of popular sagas which he rewrote with considerable elaboration, and which happily directed attention to neglected sources of genuine poetry. The grace and roguishness characteristic of Wieland are strikingly reproduced in these stories by Musäus, although the simple, popular tone is not yet struck, as it afterward was by the Grimm brothers in their fairy tales.

Musäus
(1735-87).

Johann Gottfried Herder, born August 25, 1744, at Mohrunen in East Prussia, was the son of a teacher who earned a desperately small livelihood. From his early boy-

¹ *Popular German Fairy Tales.*

hood Herder read everything he could find, especially the Bible, and as a youth of sixteen he acted as secretary to the assistant pastor of his native town, because the position offered him further opportunity to gratify his insatiable desire for knowledge.

Herder's
Life
(1744-1803).

In 1762, assisted by a Russian army surgeon, he went to the university at Königsberg, where he intended to study medicine; but he turned to theology and philosophy, heard Kant's lectures, and was led to the study of Shakespeare by his friend Johann Georg Hamann (1730-88), the deeply thoughtful "magus of the north." These stimuli and the reading of Rousseau's philosophical and pedagogical writings awakened bold schemes in Herder, such as the writing of a history of mankind. From 1764 to 1769 he was a teacher and preacher in Riga. Here the study of Lessing's *Literaturbriefe* and *Laokoon* spurred him to his *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur*¹ and to the first part of his *Kritische Wälder*.² In 1769 he journeyed to Nantes by sea, and from there to Paris, associating in the French capital with Diderot and d'Alembert and being deeply impressed by treasures of art. Returning to Hamburg, where he became acquainted with Lessing, Herder started, in 1770, on a journey as tutor to a prince of Holstein-Eutin. During their stay in Darmstadt Herder became engaged to Karoline Flachsland, afterward his wife, and formed his friendship with Johann Heinrich Merck, who was later an intimate friend of Goethe's. Herder parted from his princely charge in September, 1770, and went to Strasburg to have his eyes treated. Here Herder came into the close relations with the young student Goethe, which, as we shall see, were of fundamental importance in the latter's literary development. Appointed chaplain to the small princely court in Bückeburg in 1771, Herder found time in the succeeding years to continue his studies in theology and

¹ *Papers on Recent German Literature.*

² *Critical Forests.*

his varied literary pursuits. In 1776 Goethe's recommendation led Duke Karl August, Wieland's former pupil, to appoint Herder President of the Lutheran Consistory in the Duchy of Weimar. Herder resided in Weimar the remainder of his life; he prepared there his two greatest works, *Volkslieder*¹ and *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*.² In his later years, especially after a journey to Italy in 1788-89, he grew more and more irritable. His relations with Goethe lost their warmth, he did not recognize the genius of Schiller, and he made an unhappy campaign against Kant. Herder died December 18, 1803, at Weimar, where he lies buried in the town church. His grave is marked by his motto "Light, Love, Life."

Herder was broadly educated, fertile in ideas, restless in investigation, full of feeling for everything beautiful and human, and full of the power of inspiring others. He first made known the innate beauty and value of popular poetry. His conception of true humanity, consisting in a union of reason and fairness, of knowledge and love, became and has remained the standard for the greatest men of his country. Herder was fond of taking Lessing's writings as the starting-point of his discussions, and he corrected and supplemented Lessing in many points of criticism, but he lacked his predecessor's calm logic and scientific method. With Lessing the chief factor is the intellect, with Herder, feeling; the former convinces, the latter persuades. Herder's train of thought is alluring, but not always under control; his manner of presentation is novel and rich in figures of speech, but fragmentary. Herder was hypersensitive to impressions of every kind, and thus he was led to surrender unwarrantably to momentary moods, and to attack with a severity that

Herder as a
Writer and
a Man.

¹ *Folk-Songs.*

² *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind.*

reacted upon himself, and injured him as much as others. His life has indeed almost the effect of a tragedy; a pathfinder of a new time, inspired by the purest love of mankind and by the noblest ideals, the master fell back embittered when he saw himself outstripped by his pupils, and lost his tremendous influence, not without his own fault, almost as swiftly as he had won it.

Herder was not a great poet. With the exception of the lyrical drama *Admetus' Haus*¹ and various poems which he called "legends" and "parables," he rarely rises in his creative works above polished rhetoric. His real and great gift was his instinct

Herder's
Criticism in
Literature.

for the poetic. Inspired by Rousseau and Hamann, he saw in the return to nature man's only salvation, even in the field of poetry. The natural, spontaneous revelation of the inmost being, the simple, artless expression of feeling, was to him the highest of all art; rigid rules he hated. His efforts to understand and judge every literary work according to the historical conditions of its genesis—time, climate, nationality, subjective individuality of the author—began a new method in writing the history of literature. In the early *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur* (1766–67) he attacks the spirit of imitation and that of submission to cold common-sense in language and poetry, and cites the popular and native as the truly poetic; thus he became a leader for ambitious young authors. He supplements Lessing's strictly logical *Literaturbriefe* by emphasizing feeling. Lessing's *Laokoon* is supplemented in a somewhat similar manner by the first of the three *Kritische Wälder*² (1769); Herder used this rather singular title in accordance with Quintilian's definition of *sylyæ* as used by Latin authors, that is, with the meaning of "rapidly executed literary compositions." Lessing had referred to Homer as one of the poets who write with a consciousness of their art,

¹ *The House of Admetus.*

² *Critical Forests.*

but Herder now declares that Homer embodies perfectly his conception of a poet of unpremeditated art. Herder makes a distinction between popular, natural poetry and poetry that is the product of conscious art, and he lays great emphasis on the observance of this distinction in discussing works of literature. A kind of addendum to the first *Wäldchen* as well as to Lessing's *Laokoon* is formed by the treatise *Plastik*¹ (1778), which establishes distinctions between painting and sculpture, and ascribes the feeling for beauty which a statue or painting arouses, not to the form or color, but to the impression of animate life in the figure presented. Again Herder supplemented expositions of Lessing's, to be found in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, in his contributions to *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*² (1773), a work by several authors. In the article *Shakespeare*, Herder shows that the English dramatist was a product of his time and environment; Shakespeare differs therefore from the great Greek dramatists, but his plays are on the same plane with theirs in the essentials of dramatic art, namely, in the effect on imagination and feeling. Another contribution to *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* by Herder is the *Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*;³ it contains Herder's distinction between popular poetry and the poetry of conscious art as to the character of their origin, as to content, manner of composition and delivery, and as to general tone. He also calls for collections of popular songs which may lead Germans into the path of real poetry. The great result of this essay was the resurrection of the folk-song and ballad in Germany. Nicolai tried indeed to make the poetry of the people ridiculous in his *Feyner Kleyner Almanach*⁴ (1777), but

¹ *Plastic Art.*² *On German Ways and Art.*³ *An Exchange of Letters on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Nations.*⁴ *A Fine Little Almanac.*

his efforts were fruitless. Goethe, Bürger, Claudius, and other poets were Herder's enthusiastic supporters and aides.

The depth and tenderness of Herder's interest in the popular poetry of all times and nations is revealed in his collection *Volkslieder*¹ (1778-79), which was compiled after the model of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), and later renamed *Stimmen der Völker*² by the publishers. The collection consists of a hundred and eighty-two popular songs, forty of German origin, the rest excellent translations. Among the latter are songs from Norway, Denmark, Scotland, England, France, Spain, Italy, from Latin and Greek antiquity, from Lithuania, Lapland, and Greenland, even from Dalmatia and Peru. With the folk-songs Herder includes, in accordance with his theory, passages from Ossian and the Norse epic *Edda*, from Shakespeare, Sappho, and old German poetry such as the *Ludwigslied*, even modern popular poems by Goethe and Claudius. In the essay *Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie*³ (1782-83) he disclosed and described with a fine sense of appreciation the peculiar characteristics of old Hebraic poetry as found in the Old Testament. Herder's collection of folk-songs are a testimonial of his keen penetration and feeling for the spirit of foreign languages, but his German versions of longer works show that his gifts in this line were capable of sustained effort. His most famous long translation, or, better, "Der Cid" (1805), entitled *Der Cid*. The original form of this work was a large collection of old Spanish ballads on the stirring deeds of a popular Spanish hero of the eleventh century. Herder knew most of these ballads only in a French prose version, but nevertheless he has rendered

¹ *Folk-Songs.*

² *Voices of the Nations.*

³ *On the Genius of Hebrew Poetry.*

the spirit of the original unsurpassably. At the same time his embodiment of the exotic story presents a rich variety of universal human traits and a simple, wholesome philosophy of life applicable to Herder's countrymen as well as to the Cid's, and thus the poem has become a component part and treasure of German literature. Herder's gift of sympathetic appreciation enabled him also to turn various lyrical passages from the Old Testament and from Greek and Oriental poets into classical German. As we have said, he could find the poetic in all forms, ages, and countries; he could also make it comprehensible to others, and thus he enlarged the views which his countrymen held of literature and of the history of literature.

The theology of Herder's time had grown hard and deterrent, either through extreme orthodoxy or through extreme rationalism. Herder opposed the more dominant views of the rationalists with earnest vigor, especially on account of their lack of historical perspective, and he made a splendid effort to reanimate religious life by proclaiming the value of the Scriptures for the moral and spiritual welfare of man, and by strengthening piety and religious feeling. These are the views and aims of the treatises *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte*¹ (1774) and *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*² (1774-76). Other essays contain his analysis of the German language and of language in general. His discernment and his wonderful instinct for the truth in such investigations are illustrated by the little treatise *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*,³ the prize essay of the Berlin Academy in 1770. Herder declared language to be the product of the intellect by which man rules over nature, and an evolution of sounds from living nature into distinguishing symbols.

Herder's
Works on
Religion and
Philosophy.

¹ *Another Philosophy of History.*

² *The Oldest Record of the Human Race.*

³ *On the Origin of Language.*

Here, too, Herder was sowing seed which brought forth a rich harvest; the science of comparative linguistics, as carried on by Wilhelm von Humboldt, Jakob Grimm, Franz Bopp, and others, received from Herder one of its mightiest impulses. Herder's comprehensive learning and his familiarity with every phase of thought fitted him also to revolutionize the writing of history. He conceived humanity as a great whole, and again starting out from theories of Lessing, he tried to demonstrate a divine progression of the human race leading to the highest culture, to true religion, to "humanity." The manifold character of human development he explained by the variation of nature in different zones and countries, and by the diversity of the individual. The chief work in which Herder presents these ideas is his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*¹ (1784-91), his masterpiece. Although incomplete, inasmuch as it treats only the civilization of the Orient, Greece, Rome, and the Christian Middle Ages, although unevenly carried out and sometimes too bold in its solutions of the most difficult problems, the *Ideen* shows all of Herder's gifts at their best: astonishing wealth of new and fruitful ideas, striking presentation, lofty moral enthusiasm, and acute historical penetration. Herder made history a rational science. Instead of merely reciting successive events, historians were now taught to treat the whole life of nations by methods of comparison and as a continuous growth. It is greatly to be regretted that Herder did not complete his *Ideen*, but happily this loss is made up in part by his *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*² (1793-97), in which he takes the views and deeds of great men of modern times as the starting-point of his ideas on the advancement of reason, religion, humanity, and culture.

¹ *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind.*

² *Letters Concerning the Advancement of Humanity.*

In his ode *Der Hügel und der Hain* ¹ (1767), Klopstock takes the Hügel, or Parnassus, as the symbol of classical and pseudo-classical, that is, un-German poetry, and the Hain as the symbol of Germanic and German, therefore national poetry. Inspired by this ode, six young admirers of Klopstock who were studying in Göttingen formed, on the twelfth of September, 1772, the so-called *Hainbund*, or "grove league." Each member solemnly vowed to prize friendship and virtue, liberty and fatherland, as man's most precious possessions, and as "bards," to nurture the art of poetry in the German, national spirit of Klopstock. The league celebrated the birthday of the master as if it were a consecrated holiday, and despised Wieland as a "corrupter of morals" on account of the sensual novels of his earlier career. To their great delight Klopstock visited them in 1774, while on a journey to Karlsruhe. As a league of students the *Hainbund* broke up in 1775, when only one member, Voss, was left in Göttingen; the friendships and coöperation in the achievement of literary ambitions continued for many years. The oldest member and the sane, sensible adviser of the group, Heinrich Christian Boie (1744-1806), made an annual, which he had begun to edit in 1770, *Der Musenalmanach*,² the organ of the league. In 1775 Boie's place as editor was taken by Voss, the leading spirit of the *Hainbund*. The *Almanach* went through various vicissitudes later, but it continued to appear until 1800. Other members of the league besides Boie and Voss were Hölty, Miller, the two counts of Stolberg, and Leisewitz; Bürger and Claudius were not members, but they were friends of those named and were in sympathy with their efforts. Except Klopstock, and perhaps Ossian, no one left as indelible a stamp upon the Göttingen poets as Herder did. They wrote not only bard-songs and impassioned odes but, as far as it was given

The
"Göttinger
Hainbund."

¹ *The Hill and the Grove.*

² *The Muses' Almanac.*

to them, they also sang melodious songs in the style of the people, which with those of the youthful Goethe were the first response to Herder's stirring appeal. Herder's defence of natural, spontaneous poetry, his proclamation of Homer, the folk-song, and Shakespeare as supreme models, found immediate acceptance in Göttingen. However varying their poetic talents and inclinations were, however far apart the members of the league drifted in after-life, they always remained true to the ideals of Klopstock and Herder.

Johann Heinrich Voss, who was born in 1751, was a schoolmaster in Eutin from 1782 to 1802, and died in 1826, a professor in the university at Heidelberg. Voss was an enlightened, capable man, whose greatest creative talent lay in the description of rural and domestic life. He was the originator of the truthful idyl of simple German life, and thus he set up an interesting literary contrast with the untrue Arcadian idyl of Gessner. *Luise*, the forerunner of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, and *Der siebenzigste Geburtstag*¹ (1781), both of which are written in hexameters, are Voss's most famous and most popular idyls. *Luise* is in three parts, which appeared singly at first in 1782-84, and in a complete enlarged edition in 1795. Other idyls by Voss are written in his native Low German dialect. The German versions of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, which Voss published in 1781 and 1793, are models of translation; through them Homer's epics became as much a possession of the German people as many works written originally in German. Ludwig Hölty (1748-76), who died of consumption at the early age of twenty-eight, was the most gifted lyric poet of the Hainbund. No other member of the group left such polished odes, no other approached Hölty in the expression of melancholy and of care-free Anacreontic moods. Among his best-known poems are *Üb' immer*

The Chief
Members
of the
Hainbund.

¹ *The Seventieth Birthday.*

Treu und Redlichkeit,¹ *Wer wollte sich mit Grillen plagen*,² and *Rosen auf den Weg gestreut*.³ Of the brothers Christian and Friedrich Stolberg (the former 1748–1821, the latter 1750–1819), only the younger, a man of intense enthusiasms, had real poetic talent. He appears to best advantage in vigorous poems on his native land, *Mein Arm wird stark und gross mein Mut*,⁴ *Sohn, da hast du meinen Speer*,⁵ and *Freiheit! Der Höfling kennt den Gedanken nicht*.⁶ The only dramatist in the Hainbund, Anton Leisewitz (1752–1806), entered the league late and had few points in common with the other members. His only work, the tragedy *Julius von Tarent* (1776), unites Lessing's dramatic technic and great emotional power.

Of the two men who were only friends of the Hainbund, one was living near Göttingen in the early seventies, the other near Hamburg. Matthias Claudius (1740–1815). (born 1740, died 1815 in Hamburg) spent indeed the greater part of his life not far from Hamburg, in the town of Wandsbeck, where he was the editor of the widely read, popular periodical *Der Wandsbecker Bote*.⁷ Under the pseudonym "Asmus" he contributed a series of essays on the beauty of happy family life and charitable Christianity, which are a vivid reflection of his gentle childlike piety. However, he is known to-day chiefly through his popular songs, such as *Abendlied: Der Mond ist aufgegangen*,⁸ *Rheinweinlied: Bekränzt mit Laub den lieben, vollen Becher*,⁹ and through the genial, droll poems

¹ "My son, be honest truth thy guide."

² "Away with pouting and with pining."

³ "Roses strewn along the way."

⁴ "My arm grows strong, and great my zeal."

⁵ "Son, my spear is thine."

⁶ "Freedom! the courtier knows not the very thought."

⁷ *The Wandsbeck Messenger*.

⁸ *Evening Hymn*: "The silent moon is risen."

⁹ *A Song of Rhine Wine*: "With garlands trim the bright and brimming glasses."

*Wenn jemand eine Reise tut*¹ and *War einst ein Riese Goliath*.² The aim of Gottfried August Bürger was, like that of his friends in the Hainbund, to make his poetry thoroughly national and popular. Born on New-Year's Eve, 1747, in a village near Halberstadt, he attended the university at Halle. From 1772 to 1784 he was an official in a village in the neighborhood of Göttingen, and after that he was a professor in Göttingen. He led an unhappy, dissipated life, and died, a mental and physical wreck, in 1794. He reminds us of Günther in many ways. Bürger's greatest achievement, the powerful ballad *Lenore* (1773), was one of the results of Herder's treatise on Ossian and the songs of ancient nations. At a single stroke Bürger became the creator of the modern German ballad. *Der wilde Jäger*,³ *Das Lied vom braven Manne*,⁴ and *Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenhain*⁵ are the best of his later ballads. Bürger also wrote sonnets of high finish and impassioned lyric poems besides the merry popular romance *Münchhausens wunderbare Reisen*⁶ (1786); the theme of the latter was originally German, but Bürger based his story on an English version which R. E. Raspe had published in 1785.

By the beginning of the seventies much had been done to revolutionize and rehabilitate German literature: Klopstock had given new life to the lyric and epic by the introduction of ardent human emotion; Lessing had put German drama on its feet, and Wieland had, by his art in poetic embodiment, made a place in literature for the erring human heart; furthermore, Herder had revealed the beauties of ingenuous

The Storm
and Stress.
Its Origin
and Aims.

¹ "When a body takes a journey."

² "There once was a giant Goliath."

³ *The Wild Huntsman*.

⁴ *A Lay of an Upright Man*.

⁵ *The Pastor's Daughter of Taubenhain*.

⁶ *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*.

popular poetry, and he had proclaimed inborn creative power and unconditional surrender to inner emotion as superior to all theories of poetics. In addition to the impulse which arose from these achievements and ideas, German life and literature had also begun to feel the revolutionizing influence of the writings of Rousseau, above all, of the appeal to strike the fetters of social and political tradition, and to return to nature. Through this combination of impulses a violent agitation started among the young men of south Germany, which was afterward called the *Sturm und Drang*,¹ from the title of a drama by Klinger. Some of these men had experienced, all of them had seen, the misuse of authority in many fields—in home, school, society, church, and state—and, filled with repugnance for all authority whatsoever, they arose with the determination to reform social and political life as well as to regenerate literature. “Liberty” was the cry which now rang out all over Germany; the freedom of the individual in society and state, in art and literature, that is, in every phase of life, was their ultimate goal. We have seen above,² that in its political aspects the agitation accomplished nothing. A considerable number of German states of the time had far-sighted, efficient rulers, whose subjects were not intolerably oppressed, and the disintegrated condition of the empire offered neither the opportunity for the growth of a large public opinion nor a pre-eminent object of attack. For these reasons, the Storm and Stress made hardly any headway politically, and it has little significance in the history of the country at large. It derives its chief importance from the effect it had upon young authors of the time and upon their works.

As a phase of literature, the Storm and Stress, or the “time of genius,” as the period is sometimes called, may be said to have begun with the appearance of Herder’s

¹ *Storm and Stress*.

² Cf. p. 123.

Fragmente (1767), and to have closed with Schiller's *Don Carlos* (1787); but the first literary embodiment of its spirit

The Storm
and Stress in
Literature.

was Goethe's *Götz* (1773), and the last literary creation which arose entirely under its influence alone was Schiller's *Räuber*¹ (1781). In literature the Storm and Stress was an insurrection of youthful impulse and passion against the restraint of rules. Poets thought they were on the road to the expression of true humanity and true poetry if they abandoned tradition and rule, and surrendered completely to imagination and feeling. They often sadly lacked any sense of proportion. Consciousness of intellectual power often led them into silly eccentricities, strong, manly feeling became unrestrained sentimentality. They began with an admiring respect for poetic genius, and they ended with a worship of poetic caprice. How much the movement was a part of the time is seen by the conspicuous rôle which even the greatest spirits, Goethe and Schiller, played in it, a work of the one being the first, and a work of the other being the last expression of the movement. Goethe and Schiller underwent, in time, a thorough clarification of their ideas of life and art, but many of the men connected with the Storm and Stress never found themselves; they wasted their strength in reckless living, and their talents never matured. The movement's chief form of expression was the drama. It contains much that is pleasingly natural and popular, but also much that is crude and immature; it contains much that is absurdly unnatural in its extravagance. Shakespeare in the conception of Gerstenberg and Herder—the dramatist who cared little for the compact construction of his dramas, for unity of action, in comparison with the presentation of living, human types and impressive scenes, the poet of nature who, unconsciously following his genius alone, created solely as inner impulse prompted—was the idolized and grossly misunderstood model. No regard was paid to

¹ *The Robbers.*

the practical demands of the stage; scenes followed each other in rapid succession and bewildering confusion. As the form, so was the content; absolute unrestraint was considered manly strenuousness, orgies of feeling, deep emotion. Enraged by the contemptible aspects of life which surrounded him and fired by the intense passion of his young manhood, Schiller remained in the grip of the Storm and Stress as long as it was a commanding influence in German literary life. Goethe alone, of all the men associated with the movement, rose in the midst of the agitation to works whose conception or execution gives them a place among the great achievements of German literature. His *Götz* and the older scenes of *Faust* are filled with the most wholesome life, his *Werther* is a finished product of art in spite of the morbid basic theme, and the poems which he wrote in the seventies are, with all their abounding feeling, clear in content and polished in form.

Several men of lesser talent are identified with the Storm and Stress, for example, Heinrich Leopold Wagner (1747–79), the author of a lurid tragedy *Die Kindermörderin*¹ (1776); but, aside from Goethe and

Exponents of
the Storm
and Stress.

Schiller, only four noteworthy authors can be found among the "original geniuses." The popular blunt south German Christian Schubart (1739–91), who is in many ways akin to Bürger, was thrown into the fortress of Hohenasperg in 1777, and confined there for ten years without trial, because he had attacked the tyrannical government of Duke Karl Eugen of Würtemberg. His spirited lyrics, many of which were written in prison, show the intense political and religious feeling of the man as well as his fondness for the grewsome; they are often marred by the bombast and extravagance characteristic of the Storm and Stress. Schubart's most famous poems are *Die*

¹ *The Infanticide.*

Fürstengruft,¹ *Der ewige Jude*,² *Gefangener Mann ein armer Mann*,³ *Urquell aller Seligkeiten*,⁴ *Das Kaplied*,⁵ and the ode *Friedrich der Grosse* (1786). Schubart deeply influenced Schiller's early lyrics, and one of his stories was the source of *Die Räuber*. Friedrich Müller (born 1749 at Kreuznach, died 1825), generally called "Maler" Müller on account of his work as a painter, wrote a few vivid prose idyls on country life in his native province, the song *Heute scheid' ich, heute wandr' ich*,⁶ and a few fanciful dramas; the latter include an unfinished *Faust* and *Golo und Genoveva*, a prelude to later Romanticism. Maximilian Klinger (born in Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1752; died, a Russian official of high rank in St. Petersburg, 1831), a man of strong character, was a friend of Goethe and Rousseau's most faithful follower. He was the most fertile dramatist among the men of the Storm and Stress. His play *Die Zwillinge*,⁷ which, like Leisewitz's *Julius von Tarent*, is a treatment of fratricide, defeated the latter in a prize competition held in Hamburg in 1775 under the auspices of the actor Ludwig Schröder. Klinger's drama *Sturm und Drang* appeared in 1776. The emotional power of these plays we shall find again in Schiller's early dramas. In his first philosophical novels, which appeared from 1791 on and which include a *Faust*, the passion of Klinger's earlier days seems only half subdued; the capital story in dialogue, *Weltmann und Dichter*⁸ (1798), is the first work in which Klinger shows complete control of himself. Jakob Reinhold Lenz (1751-92), the most unrestrained of all these unbridled geniuses, was a friend of Goethe in Strasburg when they were both students. His impromptu lyrical

¹ *The Princes' Sepulchre.*

² *The Wandering Jew.*

³ "Captive man, a wretched man."

⁴ "Fountain of all happiness."

⁵ *Song of the Cape*, i. e., the Cape of Good Hope.

⁶ "To-day I leave you, to-day I wander."

⁷ *The Twins.*

⁸ *Man of the World and Poet.*

poems, his best literary work, remind us often of his friend and model, especially *Die Liebe auf dem Lande*,¹ which was written to Goethe's forsaken sweetheart, Friederike Brion. Lenz also wrote several crude, realistic dramas which embody the Storm and Stress spirit, notably *Der Hofmeister*² (1774) and *Die Soldaten*³ (1776).

The dramas of the Storm and Stress were so difficult to present that very few of them could be added to the repertoires of the theatres, but the period was not without some profit to the stage. The great actor Friedrich Ludwig Schröder (1744–1816) in Hamburg turned to Shakespeare, and greatly enriched the possibilities of the German stage by the adaptation of numerous plays by the English dramatist. Another actor, August Wilhelm Iffland (1759–1814), the manager of a theatre in Mannheim and afterward of one in Berlin, continued, at a somewhat later date, the emotional play of middle-class life which Lessing had created and which Schröder fostered. Iffland's plays, particularly *Die Jäger*⁴ (1785) and *Die Hagestolzen*⁵ (1791), were very successful, as they offered vivid representations of contemporary life. August von Kotzebue (1761–1819), a native of Weimar, was a very prolific author of comedies and emotional dramas. *Menschenhass und Reue*⁶ (1789) and *Die deutschen Kleinstädter*⁷ (1803) are the best illustrations of his exaggerated sentimentalism and his command of dramatic technic; both these plays held the stage for many years. Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–96) wrote several novels which are distinguished by their high ideals and by their fine, some-

Contemporary and Later Plays and Novels.

¹ *Love in the Country.*

² *The Soldiers.*

³ *The Bachelors.*

⁴ *German Provincials.*

⁵ *The Private Tutor.*

⁶ *The Huntsmen.*

⁷ *Misanthropy and Repentance.*

times grotesque humor, for example, *Lebensläufe nach aufsteigender Linie*¹ (1778). The doings of the "original geniuses" and other literary extravagances of the time were wittily satirized by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-99).

¹ *Human Careers in Ascending Order.*

CHAPTER XV

GOETHE'S LIFE AND GENIUS

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE was born August 28, 1749, in Frankfort-on-the-Main. His father, Johann Kaspar Goethe, was a lawyer by education, an austere, reserved man, who devoted his life to hobbies in science and art. From him the poet says he inherited his physical stature and his serious treatment of life. The child was much more attached to his mother on account of her cheery, bright disposition; she was only eighteen years older than himself, and she bequeathed to him his love of story-telling. The boy was the idol of his younger sister Cornelia, the only other child who lived beyond babyhood. They received their early instruction from their father and from private tutors. The surroundings and historical events of Goethe's boyhood offered much to stimulate his imagination, and to store his mind with memories: his father's house, which even now is standing as it was in Goethe's boyhood, with its collections of pictures and natural curiosities brought, in part, from Italy; the boy's puppet-show; the old-world city with its historical associations and lively traffic, especially during the semi-annual fairs; the deeds of Frederick the Great in the Seven Years' War; the occupation of Frankfort in 1759 by the French when the so-called "king's lieutenant" or administrative officer, Thoranc, was quartered in Goethe's home; the French theatre in Frankfort; acquaintances of every character, and among these an early love whom Goethe speaks of as Gretchen; and, lastly, the

Goethe
(1749-1832).

**His Youth
and Young
Manhood:**
1749-75.

**A Child in
Frankfort.**

coronation of Joseph II in 1764 in Frankfort. To these impressions were added those of many books, the Bible, folk-stories, Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*¹ in a German translation, Klopstock's *Messias*, and other modern works. The precocious youth also practised his talent for writing on many subjects.

In the autumn of 1765, at the age of sixteen, Goethe entered the university at Leipsic to study law. He found the lectures very dull, however, and soon turned for relief to the new refinements of society in "Klein-Paris" as Leipsic was sometimes called. His friend Behrisch, Gellert, and the wife of Professor Böhme opened his eyes to a new understanding of himself, one of the results of which was the burning of his early poems. The same friends and, above all, his love for Käthchen Schönkopf which began in the spring of 1766, inspired him to new creations. The director of the Leipsic art academy, Oeser, gave him an appreciation for the beautiful in painting and sculpture; he made a trip to Dresden in March, 1768, in order to see the art gallery there. In Leipsic, a centre of theatrical and literary life at that time, Goethe also studied the most recent products of German literature, Wieland's *Musarion*, Lessing's *Laokoon* and *Minna von Barnhelm*, and Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*.² Here, too, he acquired at least a superficial knowledge of Shakespeare. His works of this time consist of lyrics, the pastoral play *Die Laune des Verliebten*,³ and the first stages of the comedy *Die Mitschuldigen*,⁴ both of the latter being written in Alexandrines. All of these productions are along traditional French lines; they are often shallow and too sophisticated, but some of them have at least the merit of being the products of personal experience and emotion. Käthchen finally broke

His Student
Days. In
Leipsic.

¹ *Jerusalem Delivered*.

³ *The Lover's Humor*.

² *History of Ancient Art*.

⁴ *Fellow Culprits*.

the ties between herself and Goethe, and a hemorrhage from the lungs, which Goethe brought on himself by reckless living, was the beginning of a long illness for him. The last of August, 1768, he returned to his home in Frankfort, to be nursed back to health by his mother and sister. The frivolous tendencies started at Leipsic were checked by his association with an ardently pietistic friend and relative of his mother's, Susanna von Klettenberg, whom he afterward immortalized as "a beautiful soul" in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.¹ Studies in alchemy, which he later utilized in *Faust*, aroused his interest in natural science.

In April, 1770, Goethe went to Strasburg to finish his study of law. As before, he did not confine himself to the one subject. In addition to law, he studied natural science and medicine especially, in part under the inspiration of a group of men with whom he dined regularly. One of these table companions was Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740-1817), a man of most naïve, confiding character, who had suffered bitter privations in his youth. He was now studying medicine in Strasburg, and afterward became a renowned oculist. His description of his early life, *Heinrich Stilings Jugend*² (1777), which Goethe published without his knowledge, is delightfully sincere and simple, and is ranked nowadays among the chap-books of German literature. Goethe became acquainted with Lenz in 1771 during his last semester at the university. In Strasburg, through talks with friends as well as through his new life in general, Goethe was led to realize, as never before, the full significance of the clash between German and French which had been going on in German literature during the preceding decades. In Alsace, at this time a French pos-

In Strasburg.
The Beginning of His
Storm and
Stress.

¹ *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*.

² *Heinrich Stilling's Youth*.

session, and especially in Strasburg, history, art as embodied in the famous cathedral, and the character of the people at large were chiefly German; the manners and language of exclusive society were mainly French. Of all the people whom Goethe met in Strasburg, the most permanent influence exerted upon him by any one was that of Herder, his elder by five years. Herder convinced him that the "art of poetry is a universal popular gift, not an inheritance of a small, cultured class"; he revealed to him the beauty of folk-poetry, of the Bible, Shakespeare, Ossian, and Homer, and he unloosed all the Storm and Stress elements which were slumbering in the young poet, by teaching him that his own heart is each man's most precious possession and its expression his first duty. Goethe's collection of Alsatian folk-songs and his thoroughly popular poem *Heidenröslein*¹ were directly due to Herder's appeal. In October, 1770, Goethe became acquainted with Friederike Brion, a pastor's daughter who lived in the village of Sesenheim, twenty miles north of Strasburg. The love which this simple child of nature awoke in Goethe opened the way to the first outburst of pure and natural lyric poetry in modern German literature. Such poems as *Kleine Blumen, kleine Blätter*,² *Es schlug mein Herz; geschwind zu Pferde*,³ and *Wie herrlich leuchtet mir die Natur*⁴ mark the dawn of a new era. Beginning with these verses, all of Goethe's literary works are "fragments of one long confession." This was the seed-time of *Götz* and *Faust*. In the summer of 1771 Goethe's happy life in Alsace came to a close and with it the Sesenheim idyl. Full of remorse that he had conjured up a dream only to shatter it, he left Friederike. He foresaw his father's bitter opposition to the idea of their

¹ *The Rose on the Heath.*

² "Little flowers, little leaves."

³ "To horse!—away, o'er hill and steep."

⁴ "How gloriously gleameth all nature to me."

marriage, and he himself was not ready to sacrifice the freedom of his young manhood. In the following years Friederike was in his mind when he drew Marie in *Götz* and *Clavigo*, and Gretchen in *Faust*, all three characters true and trusting women forsaken by their lovers. The degree of a licentiate in law, which carried with it the permission to use the title of Doctor, was conferred on Goethe in August, 1771, and he returned to Frankfort at once.

His father received the young lawyer with pride and joy, and all with whom he came in contact were captivated by the handsome, spirited, kindly youth.

His Entrance into Life. Goethe by no means kept aloof from society, but he worked restlessly, too, partly to forget Friederike and partly to develop his talents. He stood with Herder in the forefront of the Storm and Stress in German literature. The first impressive product of this movement is Goethe's *Geschichte Gottfriedens von Berlichingen*,¹ a series of dramatic scenes written late in 1771, but not published until 1832 after Goethe's death. It is a work of exuberant genius, which sprang directly from his Shakespeare idolatry. The latter is also expressed memorably in a speech, *Zum Shakespearetag*,² which Goethe delivered in Frankfort on the 14th of October, 1771. The influence of Herder and the association with the satirical army paymaster Johann Heinrich Merck (1741-91) in Darmstadt, a keen critic of Goethe's literary products, sharpened Goethe's critical faculty, and spurred him to the highest demands upon himself. The book reviews which he furnished in 1772 to the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen*,³ a journal, are written in the spirit of Herder, Hamann, and Merck, and testify to the earnestness with which Goethe sought the light; his essay *Über deutsche Baukunst*⁴ (pub-

¹ *Story of Gottfried of Berlichingen.*

² *For the Shakespeare Celebration.*

³ *Frankfort Literary Review.*

⁴ *On German Architecture.*

lished November, 1772), a glowing tribute to the builder of the Strasburg cathedral Erwin von Steinbach, also bears traces of Herder. The poems *Der Wanderer*¹ and *Wanderers Sturmlied*² were written in 1772, the latter under the influence of the Greek poet Pindar. Goethe spent the summer of the same year, May to September, in Wetzlar, in order to observe the practice of state and civil law at the seat of the Imperial Law Court. The inefficiency of the Court could only provoke his disgust and indignation, but his intercourse with educated young men proved a stimulus to him, the idyllic surrounding country refreshed him, and his almost unconquerable passion for Charlotte Buff, the betrothed of his friend Kestner, was an emotional experience of great consequence in his literary career. After a visit in Thal near Coblenz at the home of Sophie La Roche and her daughter Maximiliane, Goethe travelled homeward up the Rhine and Main.

The period from September, 1772, to November, 1775, Goethe spent almost entirely in Frankfort. He resumed his activities as a lawyer, but at the same time found leisure for society and for various intellectual pursuits. He wrote on questions concerning the Bible, sketched splendid dramatic fragments, among others *Mahomet* and *Prometheus*, turned earlier dramatic scenes into a more compact play, *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), which produced a literary furore in Germany, and wrote the poems *Das Veilchen*,³ *Adler und Taube*,⁴ and others. Further, stirred by his hopeless love for Charlotte Buff, by the suicide of a Wetzlar acquaintance, Jerusalem, on account of unrequited love, and by his commiseration for the unhappy marriage of Maximiliane La Roche, he wrote the novel *Die Leiden des*

His Last
Years in
Frankfort.

¹ *The Wanderer.*

³ *The Violet.*

² *A Wanderer's Storm Song.*

⁴ *Eagle and Dove.*

jungen Werthers ¹ in the months of February and March, 1774; it created a still greater sensation than *Götz*, and won for Goethe the name of a world-renowned poet. Among other works of these years are the satirical dramas, *Pater Brey*, *Satyros*, and *Das Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilern*,² all in the style of Hans Sachs, the satire *Götter, Helden und Wieland*,³ which is directed against Wieland's distorted pictures of Greek antiquity, the magnificent fragments of a religious epic to be called *Der ewige Jude*,⁴ poems such as *Ganymed*, *Prometheus*, *An Schwager Kronos*,⁵ and *Der König in Thule*,⁶ the tragedy of middle-class life *Clavigo* (1774), written under the influence of *Emilia Galotti*, and the beginnings of *Faust* (1773-75), especially the portion dealing with the tragedy of Gretchen. Besides Herder and Merck, his intimate friends were Schlosser, the betrothed and, from 1773, the husband of his sister, and the "original geniuses" Lenz, Klinger, and Wagner. Goethe made the acquaintance of Klopstock when the latter was on his way to Karlsruhe, and later began his friendship with the philosopher Friedrich Jacobi (1743-1819). Together with Lavater, whom he assisted with various suggestions in his *Physiognomische Fragmente*,⁷ and the pedagogue J. B. Basedow (1723-90), he journeyed in 1774 down the Lahn and Rhine; he wrote the little drama *Künstlers Erdewallen*⁸ while they lingered in Ems, and commemorated various features of the journey in the poem *Diner in Coblenz*.⁹ In December, 1774, Goethe was visited in Frankfort by the hereditary prince of Saxe-Weimar, Karl August. Early in the following year Goethe became engaged to Elisabeth Schöнемann, the vivacious, fascinating daughter of a family living in Frankfort. The

¹ *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.² *The Fair at Plundersweilern*.³ *Gods, Heroes, and Wieland*.⁴ *The Wandering Jew*.⁵ *To Driver Chronos*.⁶ *The King in Thule*.⁷ *Papers on Physiognomy*.⁸ *The Artist's Earthly Pilgrimage*.⁹ *Dinner in Coblenz*.

parents on both sides opposed the match, however, and the engagement was ultimately broken. Goethe's love for "Lili," as he called his betrothed, was the inspiration of *Herz, mein Herz, was soll das geben*¹ and numerous other poems, of the operettas *Erwin und Elmire* and *Claudine von Villa Bella*, and of the "drama for lovers," *Stella* (1775). After a trip to Switzerland, from May to July, with the Stolberg brothers, which he thought might free him from his passion for Lili, Goethe began the tragedy *Egmont*, writing, it seems, more than half of the play. Complete freedom from his uncomfortable position in Frankfort society did not come, however, until the autumn of the year, when he received and accepted an invitation from Karl August to visit him in Weimar. The latter was now Duke of Saxe-Weimar, having attained his eighteenth birthday and with it his majority September 3, 1775.

Goethe arrived in Weimar on the 7th of November, 1775. Various members of the ducal court received him coldly, they were too conscious of his middle-class origin, but Karl August and his wife, his mother, and Wieland were most cordial from the start. Goethe entered into the gay life of the little ducal capital with all his enthusiasm and abandon, and was soon acquainted with all the members of Weimar society. Among these was Charlotte von Stein (1742-1827), the wife of a Master of the Horse. The influence of this high-minded, cultured woman was deeper by far than that of any other man or woman now in the circle of Goethe's friends. His love for Frau von Stein was the purest and most inspiring of his life. She, more than any other woman he ever knew, purified and strengthened his character and his poetry. Traits of hers are unmistakable in his portraits of the Princess in *Tasso* and the title character in *Iphigenie*, two of his most finished,

His First
Years in
Weimar:
1775-86.

New Friends
and Duties.

¹ "Heart, my heart, how will this end?"

noblest female figures. In 1776, in order to keep his friend longer, the Duke appointed Goethe to a seat and vote in the Privy Council. Thus Goethe entered the service of the duchy; at one time or another he controlled the War Commission, the Highways Commission, the Finances, the Department of Mines, and that of Forestry. However, as he later suggested in the poem *Ilmenau* (1783), the hardest of his first tasks for the good of the state was to train and develop the unruly genius of the young Duke. As for himself, he was struggling for a victory over his own Storm and Stress, for lasting inner peace, for a purer humanity; how he struggled is immortalized in the lyric *Der du von dem Himmel bist*¹ (1776). Herder's removal to Weimar in 1776 drew the ties between him and Goethe still closer. The mood for further work on *Faust* and *Egmont* did not arise during these first years in Weimar; the study of the ancients began to attract Goethe more. The Duke's private theatricals, which had been the court circle's only dramatic entertainment since the burning of the castle and the theatre in 1774, enlisted Goethe's serious interest. He engaged Corona Schröter, an actress of unusual talent, as a member of the troupe, and wrote various dramas and operettas to be performed by her and others, *Die Geschwister*² which suggests his relation to Frau von Stein, *Proserpina*, and *Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*.³ The novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, begun in 1777, did not get farther than a beginning, but the drama *Iphigenie auf Tauris*⁴ was written out in prose in 1779, and performed with Schröter in the title part and Goethe in the rôle of Orestes. Among the poems written by 1779 are *Hans Sachsens poetische Sendung*,⁵ *Rastlose Liebe*,⁶ *Seefahrt*,⁷

¹ "Thou that from the heavens art."

² *Brother and Sister*.

³ *The Triumph of Sentimentality*.

⁴ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*.

⁵ *Hans Sachs's Poetical Mission*.

⁶ *Restless Love*.

⁷ *On the Sea*.

Harzreise im Winter,¹ *An den Mond*,² and *Der Fischer*.³ In September, 1779, the Duke and Goethe went to Switzerland for four months. Thanks to Goethe's influence, Karl August returned a changed, mature man.

In 1780 Goethe began the drama *Torquato Tasso*, but he soon laid it aside, and took up a thorough study of anatomy, osteology, botany, and geology; his study of osteology was the most immediately fruitful phase of his work in these sciences, as it led in 1784 to his discovery of the intermaxillary bone in the human skeleton. He was ennobled with the surname "von Goethe" and appointed to the position of presiding officer of the Privy Council, that is, Prime Minister of the duchy, in 1782. His time was much occupied by official duties, by science, and by a study of the philosophy of Spinoza (1632-77), which Herder had recommended to him. Spinoza's exalted ethical standard, boundless unselfishness, Goethe's friendship with Herder, and above all, his association with Frau von Stein had a steadying, clarifying effect on the poet's character. In 1783 he stopped his work on a powerful dramatic fragment *Elpenor* and on a religious epic *Die Geheimnisse*,⁴ never finishing either; between 1782 and 1785 the first half of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in its first form was completed. By 1786 Goethe had also written several operettas, including *Die Fischerin*,⁵ a revised version of *Werther*, and the poems *Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh'* ⁶ (1780, on top of the Gickelhahn, a mountain near Ilmenau), *Meine Göttin*,⁷ *Grenzen der Menschheit*,⁸ *Das Göttliche*,⁹ *Erlkönig*,¹⁰ *Auf Miedings*

The Passing
of His Storm
and Stress.

¹ *A Journey in the Harz (Mountains) in Winter.*

² *To the Moon.*

⁴ *Mysteries.*

⁶ "Over all the hill-tops is peace."

⁸ *Limits of Humanity.*

¹⁰ *The Elf-king.*

³ *The Fisherman.*

⁵ *The Fisher Maiden.*

⁷ *My Goddess.*

⁹ *The Godlike.*

Tod,¹ *Der Sänger*,² *Mignon*, and *Zueignung*.³ Life in Weimar, however, gradually became unbearable to Goethe. He was too much distracted by duties of office to write as he desired, and he was distressed by his relation to Frau von Stein; with her he could not be satisfied with mere friendship, and there was no hope of anything more. At last he resolved to flee.

On the 3d of September, 1786, Goethe stole away from Karlsbad, where he and the Duke were resting from their labors, without telling even Karl August anything definite about his plans. He struck straight for the south, toward the land of his longing, over the Brenner Pass, along the Lago di Garda, and through Verona to Venice, where he first entered into the enjoyment of the art and life of Italy, then on to Florence, and at last to Rome, where he arrived on the 29th of October. Here he joyously gave himself up to impressions of popular life and to a study of the remains of antiquity, associated with the artists Tischbein, Trippel, and Angelica Kauffmann, with Karl Philipp Moritz (1757-93), the author of a memorable biographical novel, *Anton Reiser*, with the art critic Heinrich Meyer, and others. In December, 1786, Goethe finished a new version in iambic pentameter of *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. He left Rome February 22 and arrived in Naples three days later; there he made a friend of the landscape painter Hackert, climbed Vesuvius three times, and visited Pompeii and the temple ruins of Pæstum. On the further journey to Sicily he realized the poetry of the sea, studied the *Odyssey* at Palermo, sketched a tragedy *Nausikaa*, visited the ancient ruins at Girgenti and Taormina, and roamed over the island as far as Messina. He arrived in Naples again May 15, after a perilous voyage back from Sicily, and in

His Sojourn
in Italy:
1786-88.

¹ *On the Death of Mieding.*

² *The Minstrel.*

³ *Dedication.*

Rome June 6, where he remained at work and play eleven months. He modelled in clay and sketched landscapes and figures, completed *Egmont*, wrote the scene of the Witches' Kitchen in *Faust* in the gardens of the Villa Borghese, immortalized his affection for the beautiful Maddalena Riggi of Milan in the poem *Amor als Landschaftsmaler*,¹ took part in and described the gay life of the Carnival, and finally departed from the full, free life of Rome with bitter reluctance in April, 1788. His journey home was broken by a sojourn in Florence, where he worked further at his *Tasso*, and by one in Constance. His stay in Italy, which he called his "renaissance," cured him of much that had tormented him in Germany. It established his mental poise, it perfected his understanding for the beautiful, and it taught him to appreciate the ancients in their true form, in their "noble simplicity and quiet dignity."

Goethe arrived in Weimar June 18, 1788. His return was jubilantly celebrated by his friends, but very soon the limitations of life in Weimar seemed more stifling to him than ever. On the 13th of July he took Christiane Vulpius (born 1764), the pretty daughter of a petty Weimar official, into his house. Christiane became his faithful, devoted companion, and in spite of her lack of education, she was not unappreciative of his gifts. She was the inspiration of several of the *Römische Elegien*² (1788-89), and of the poems *Der Besuch*,³ *Metamorphose der Pflanzen*⁴ (1798), *Frühzeitiger Frühling*⁵ (1802), *Gefunden*⁶ (1813), *Geheimes*⁷ (1814), and *Frühling übers Jahr*⁸ (1816). Weimar society was greatly shocked by

From His
Return from
Italy to the
Death of
Schiller:
1788-1805.

First Signs
of Literary
Stagnation.

¹ *Cupid as a Landscape Painter.* ² *Roman Elegies.*

³ *The Visit.*

⁴ *The Metamorphosis of Plants.*

⁵ *Early Spring.*

⁶ *Found.*

⁷ *Secret.*

⁸ *Springtime All the Year.*

the lack of churchly sanction to the union between Goethe and Christiane, as well as by the fact that he had stooped to a daughter of the people. Frau von Stein broke with him completely, leaving a void in his life which was never wholly filled again; but Karl August, Herder, and other friends, in accordance with liberal views of the time, approved the union. In September, 1788, Goethe met Schiller in the near-by town Rudolstadt. They were, however, not drawn to each other; Goethe's chastened sense of the artistic had been offended by the lack of restraint in Schiller's early works, and he could not approach Schiller with cordiality and frankness. Besides a part of the *Römische Elegien*, Goethe's dramatic scene *Künstlers Apotheose*¹ was also written in 1788, and in 1788-89 the drama *Torquato Tasso* was finished. *Faust, ein Fragment*² was printed in 1790 and, like *Tasso*, met with little appreciation. Between 1787 and 1790 Goethe published an eight-volume edition of his collected works. As the Duke now released him from all official duties except the supervision of the ducal institutions for the promotion of science and art, Goethe found leisure to respond to the spur of Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft*³ by a study of philosophy, and to resume his studies in natural science on a large scale. His *Versuch, die Metamorphose der Pflanzen zu erklären*,⁴ published in 1790, is now recognized by science as basic in its theories, but at the time of its publication it was hardly noticed. The *Beiträge zur Optik*,⁵ which appeared in 1791-92, is a work of less scientific value, but it treats a subject which held Goethe's interest for many years. In March, 1790, Goethe went to Venice to escort the Dowager Duchess Anna Amalia home. He returned to Weimar in

¹ *The Artist's Apotheosis.*

² *Faust, a Fragment.*

³ *Critique of Judgment.*

⁴ *An Attempt to Explain the Metamorphosis of Plants.*

⁵ *Contributions to the Study of Optics.*

June, bringing with him the manuscript of his *Venezianische Epigramme*.¹ At the urgent request of the Duke, he was present from July to October at an encampment of the Prussian army on the frontier of Silesia. The following year Goethe assumed control of the court theatre, and by the excellence of the performances there, he created a standard of importance in the development of the German stage. His attention was drawn to the poetry of India by Forster's translation of an English version of Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*.

Goethe followed the course of the French Revolution at first with the liveliest interest as he saw the necessity of a thorough change in existing conditions, but the violence of various events seemed to him unfair and inexpedient, and he turned from the Revolution in aristocratic disgust when he began to see in it only the triumph of mob rule. As early as 1791 he used Revolutionary phases of French life in his dramatic work, the profligate character of French society before the Revolution in the comedy *Der Gross-Kophta*,² and the confusion arising from factions and from popular greed in the unfinished comedy *Die Aufgeregten*.³ He came into personal contact with the Revolution in August, 1792, when he accompanied Karl August on the fruitless campaign against France which various monarchs of Europe had undertaken with the purpose of restoring the French king to his throne. Years afterward Goethe published an account of the campaign, but the first-fruits of this experience were a treatise which incorporated the results of observations in natural science made under great difficulties. He returned to Germany by way of Coblenz and Pempelfort, where he visited his friend Jacobi, arriving in Weimar December 16. The following year, in order to forget the political unrest,

During the
French
Revolution.

¹ *Venetian Epigrams*.

² *The Grand-Cophta*.

³ *The Agitated*.

he turned the Low German beast epic, *Reineke Fuchs*,¹ into High German hexameters, and published it in 1794; thus "this mirror for courts and regents, this reflector of the human race in its true, beastlike nature," found a final German form. Again at Karl August's command he had to leave Weimar in May, 1793, to take part in the siege of Mainz from the Prussian headquarters. He visited his mother in Frankfort on the way and again on the return; he arrived in Weimar the last of August. The following months were devoted primarily to investigations in optics, botany, and the science of art; the latter was in coöperation with Heinrich Meyer, who was now in Weimar and who lived for several years in Goethe's house. But besides these avocations, Goethe had in hand the management of the court theatre and the development of the mines at Ilmenau, and he was studying Homer. Ever since his return from Italy a blight seemed to have been resting upon his poetry; in no other period of his life did he produce so little. His creative genius seemed to be drying up rapidly and permanently.

Goethe's poetry rose to new life and achievement during the friendship between him and Schiller. In 1794 these two greatest poets of Germany had been living near each other for over five years, Goethe in Weimar and Schiller in Jena, and they were hardly acquainted with each other. Schiller now invited Goethe, in June, 1794, to contribute to his periodical, *Die Horen*.² Goethe consented, and in July Schiller met him at a meeting of a scientific society, and awoke his lively interest by a conversation with him. In a kindly, appreciative letter, written August 23, Schiller summed up Goethe's life and work; Goethe replied cordially, and therewith the bond between them, one of the most important events in the history of German literature,

The Begin-
ning of His
Friendship
with
Schiller.

¹ *Reynard the Fox*.

² *The Hours*.

was formed forever. Goethe now perceived Schiller's merits, and he opened his mind and heart to him without reserve. Schiller at once aroused Goethe's slumbering genius, and called forth the latter's grateful confession: "You have made me a poet again." Their correspondence which thus began, and which continued without interruption until Schiller's death, is an invaluable memorial of their lives at this time, of how they thought, studied, and created.

The time now began for Goethe when he harvested with incredible ease the fruits of an industrious life. In the copy of *Die Horen*, which was published in 1795, appeared the two *Episteln*,¹ the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderter*,² which is for the most part a loosely connected group of translated short stories, the symbolical *Märchen*,³ and the *Römische Elegien*; in 1796-97 *Die Horen* contained Goethe's translation of the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, a Florentine goldsmith and sculptor of the sixteenth century. Under the inspiration of Schiller's sympathetic interest Goethe completed in 1795-96 *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. In 1796 they wrote together over nine hundred distichs; four hundred and fourteen of them appeared as *Xenien*,⁴ and a hundred and twenty-four as *Tabulæ votivæ*⁵ in Schiller's *Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1797*.⁶ The *Xenien* were directed mainly against the mediocrity of contemporary German literature; they called forth tremendous excitement and furious retorts on the part of authors who had been ridiculed. In the same *Almanach* appeared Goethe's elegy *Alexis und Dora*, in the following number his *Legende*,⁷ the ballads *Der Zauberlehrling*,⁸ *Der Schatzgräber*,⁹ *Die*

The Effects
of Schiller's
Influence.

¹ *Epistles*.

² *The Fairy Tale*.

³ *Votive Tablets*.

⁴ *A Legend*.

⁵ *The Treasure Seeker*.

² *Recreations of German Emigrants*.

⁴ *Xenia*, i. e., "presents to guests."

⁶ *Muses' Almanac for the Year 1797*.

⁸ *The Magician's Apprentice*.

Braut von Korinth,¹ and *Der Gott und die Bajadere*,² and in that for the year 1799 the poem *Metamorphose der Pflanzen*.³ After animated discussions with Schiller about the nature of the epic, Goethe published in 1797 the epic poem *Hermann und Dorothea*, which he had begun the year before, and which in Schiller's judgment was the climax of Goethe's and modern German art in general. During a third journey to Switzerland, July to November, 1797, Goethe composed the *Balladen von der Müllerin* ⁴ and the elegy *Euphrosyne* on the death of the young actress Christiane Neumann. With the exception of numerous short poems and *Achilleis*, a fragmentary continuation of Homer's *Iliad*, Goethe's chief interests and labors from 1797 to 1801 were dramatic. The opening of the new court theatre in 1798, with Schiller's *Prolog* and *Wallensteins Lager*,⁵ was the beginning of the halcyon days of the Weimar stage; they were the days of Goethe's most effective labors in its behalf and of Schiller's coöperation with him. In December, 1799, Schiller removed to Weimar, and the two friends now studied and wrote with still closer understanding of each other's aims, and with still greater influence upon each other. Besides further work on *Faust* and a cantata *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*,⁶ Goethe sketched a dramatic trilogy which was to present symbolically the impelling ideas of the French Revolution and his attitude toward the movement, but he completed only the first part, *Die natürliche Tochter* ⁷ (1803). His study of the history and theory of art bore fruit in the publication, from 1798 to 1800, of an art journal, *Die Propyläen*, and, afterward, in his enthusiastic treatise, *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert* ⁸ (1805). Of the poems which he wrote be-

¹ *The Bride of Corinth.*

² *The God and the Bayadere.*

³ *The Metamorphosis of Plants.*

⁴ *Ballads of the Miller's Daughter.*

⁵ *Wallenstein's Camp.*

⁶ *The First Walpurgis-Night.*

⁷ *The Natural Daughter.*

⁸ *Winckelmann and His Age.*

tween 1799 and 1805, some were social songs for the Wednesday evening gatherings at the ducal palace, *Tischlied*,¹ *Generalbeichte*,² and others; some were the spontaneous expression of lyrical feeling, *Nähe des Geliebten*,³ *Nachgefühl*,⁴ *Schäfers Klagelied*,⁵ *Trost in Tränen*,⁶ *Dauer im Wechsel*,⁷ *Frühzeitiger Frühling*,⁸ and *Nachtgesang*.⁹ Goethe himself had been critically ill in the beginning of 1801; in 1803 Herder died, and on the 9th of May, 1805, Schiller. The death of the latter was an irreparable loss to Goethe. Schiller's mind and heart had formed an ideal complement to his own; they had struggled together after artistic perfection in their works, and they had cherished in their art the same lofty ideal of humanity. Their friendly union had brought forth the flower of German poetry and the flower of German intellectual life. A few months after Schiller's death Goethe paid his friend as noble a tribute as one poet ever paid another, the poem *Epilog zu Schillers Glocke*.¹⁰

The loss of Schiller was followed during the German Napoleonic period (1806-13) by further troubles for Goethe. In the plundering of Weimar after the battle of Jena (October 14, 1806) his life was once in great danger, and it was saved only by the presence of mind of Christiane; he was married to her five days later. The Dowager Duchess died in 1807, Goethe's mother in 1808. In October of the latter year Goethe had a long conversation with Napoleon in Erfurt, which gave him occasion to marvel at the literary insight of the man as he had long marvelled at his military and political genius. This attitude of Goethe toward Napoleon was not altered

Goethe's
Later
Years:
1805-32.

During
Napoleon's
Domination
in Germany.

¹ *Drinking Song.*

³ *The Presence of the Beloved.*

⁵ *The Shepherd's Lament.*

⁷ *Permanence in Change.*

⁹ *Night Song.*

² *General Confession.*

⁴ *Remembrance.*

⁶ *Consolation in Tears.*

⁸ *Early Spring.*

¹⁰ *Epilogue to Schiller's "Bell."*

until later, and during the following years Goethe was often charged with a lack of patriotism. Nevertheless, the appearance of the First Part of *Faust* (1808), which had been completed in April, 1806, was the greatest literary event of the period; for it restored to Germany in her political distress the proud consciousness of her intellectual strength. The object of the unfinished drama *Pandora* (1808) was to teach the Germans that they should nurture the imperishable possessions of art and science, and rise again by their aid; the pseudo-classicism and the allegorical character of the work, however, made a direct effect impossible. Indeed, Goethe gradually saw that his art was growing too classical, and he therefore turned back once more to the presentation of contemporary life. The ballads *Johanna Sebus*, *Totentanz*,¹ and *Der getreue Eckhart*² met a cordial welcome, but the merits of the novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*,³ which appeared in 1809, were not generally recognized until long after its publication. The essay *Zur Farbenlehre*⁴ (1810), a notable work from a literary point of view in its arrangement of historical data on the subject and the result of many years of labor, also found few friends. Poems like the verses *Die romantische Poesie*,⁵ written for a masquerade, could affect only small circles. Goethe's study of old German poetry had begun in 1807, and in 1811 his interest in old German art was reawakened by the architect Sulpiz Boisseree of Cologne. Feeling the approach of old age, Goethe began to write the story of his life: *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit*;⁶ the first three parts appeared as early as 1811-14, the fourth part not until 1833. While Germany was beginning her struggle for freedom from the yoke of Napoleon, Goethe

¹ *The Dance of Death.*² *Faithful Eckhart.*³ *Elective Affinities.*⁴ *On the Theory of Color.*⁵ *Romantic Poetry.*⁶ *From My Life Poetry and Truth.*

at first calmly awaited the result. His love of his country had never grown cold, but his cosmopolitan spirit had accustomed itself to consider events from a standpoint that was far above the confines of his nationality. However, without pretending the enthusiasm of youth, he followed the German cause with increasing interest. When, in 1813, his country's triumph came, Goethe gave powerful expression to his joy in the allegorical play *Des Epimenides Erwachen*¹ (1814), which he wrote for an occasion commemorating the conclusion of peace.

In 1814 and 1815 Goethe made two journeys to the Rhine country, where he formed a close friendship with Marianne Willemer, a woman of unusual poetical talents. This friendship, united with Goethe's study of the Persian poet Hafiz, inspired a remarkable new series of poems in which Goethe mingled youthful passionate love and penetrating thought; they were published in 1819 under the title *Der Westöstliche Divan*.² In 1816 his wife Christiane died. In 1816-17 he edited his *Italienische Reise*³ from letters and notes in his diary, and then, having resigned from the control of the court theatre, he turned once more to scientific studies, the results of which he recorded later in several essays on the natural sciences and in the periodical *Kunst und Altertum*.⁴ Besides the poems last mentioned the *Ballade: Herein, o du Guter*⁵ and *Trauerloge*⁶ were written in 1816, and in 1818 the long *Festzug*,⁷ with its wonderful characterization of Goethe's own poetry as well as that of Wieland, Herder, and Schiller. The rich wisdom which Goethe poured forth in brief aphoristic verses in the last fifteen or twenty years of his life is to be found in *Gott, Gemüt und Welt*,⁸

His Old Age
and Death.

¹ *The Awakening of Epimenides.* ² *The West-Eastern Divan.*

³ *Travels in Italy.*

⁴ *Art and Antiquity.*

⁵ *Ballad: "Enter, oh my beloved!"*

⁶ *Memorial Service at the Masons' Lodge.*

⁷ *The Procession.*

⁸ *God, the Soul, and the World.*

Sprichwörtlich,¹ *Zahme Xenien*,² and *Sprüche in Prosa*.³ The first part of the didactic novel *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*⁴ which Goethe had begun back in 1807, and several short stories were published in 1821, in 1822 the *Campagne in Frankreich 1792*.⁵ Despite his years, in the summer of 1823, Goethe fell deeply in love with Ulrike von Levetzow (born 1804) at Marienbad. The memory of this last passion, which he subdued only after a bitter struggle, is the theme of the moving *Marienbader Elegie*, the second part of the *Trilogie der Leidenschaft*.⁶ The wonderful vigor of Goethe's last years is proved by many events, by his conversations with his faithful friend Eckermann, by the editing of his correspondence with Schiller and of his own works, *Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand*,⁷ by poems like *Paria*⁸ (1824), *Lasst fahren hin das allzu Flüchtige*⁹ (1825), *Bei Betrachtung von Schillers Schädel*¹⁰ (1826), *Dämmerung senkte sich von oben*¹¹ (1827), *Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde*¹² (1828), and *Vermächtnis*¹³ (1829), by the revision and somewhat hurried completion of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1825-29), and, above all, by the completion of the Second Part of *Faust*. This last he called his "main business," and from 1825 on he never lost sight of it. Countless visitors from many countries came to Weimar to pay him their respects, and in 1825 Karl August bestowed the highest honors in his power on Goethe in commemoration of his fifty years of service to the duchy. Karl August died in 1828, and in 1830 Goethe's

¹ *Epigrammatic.*² *Tame Xenia.*³ *Aphorisms in Prose.*⁴ *Wilhelm Meister's Travels.*⁵ *The Campaign in France in 1792.*⁶ *Trilogy of Passion.*⁷ *Last Personally Revised Complete Edition.*⁸ *Pariah.*⁹ "Let not the transitory vex us."¹⁰ *On Contemplating Schiller's Skull.*¹¹ "Twilight from on high descended."¹² *To the Rising Full Moon.*¹³ *A Legacy.*

only son August, whose wife Ottilie cared for Goethe's physical needs from 1817 until the end. After completing his life-work *Faust* in 1831, the aged poet fell asleep forever, without any real illness, on the 22d of March, 1832; four days later his body was laid away beside that of Schiller in the ducal mausoleum in Weimar.

Goethe was a great man as well as a great poet. Endowed by nature with wonderful gifts, he never idly let them take care of themselves, but he labored unceasingly all his life at the fullest, richest development of them. In character he was straightforward and kind, sincere and warm-hearted; he was most earnest in his search and admiration for truth and beauty. External need and anxiety he never knew. Serious unceasing work was his life.

Goethe's versatility is a wonder of the modern world. There is hardly a field of intellectual activity which he did not touch and advance. In poetry, in religion, in politics, in æsthetics, and in the natural sciences, the German nation, often unwittingly, owes much of its best to the titanic achievements of Goethe's intellect. He was in many respects far in advance of his time. His works, therefore, often failed to have an immediate effect, but on the other hand, they are still a vital force to-day. His mightiest influence has, of course, been through his literary creations. They have left an indelible impress upon the spiritual and mental life of Goethe's people, rarely as swiftly, directly, and universally as the works of Schiller, but all the more enduringly.

In the creative strength of his fancy, in the depth, warmth, and soundness of his feeling, in the fulness of his wisdom, in freshness and grace, in simple naturalness and melody of verse—in each of these, few German poets can be compared with Goethe; in the union of all, no one. To Goethe it was given to

Goethe as a
Man.

The Range
of Goethe's
Genius.

Goethe as a
Poet.

embody in artistic form every inner experience of his rich life; he did not embody any feeling which he had not felt within himself. The variety and completeness of his experience and its expression make Goethe the greatest lyric poet of modern times. The fashionable Anacreontic lyrics of his youth are followed by the impassioned poems of his Storm and Stress. During his first decade in Weimar his lyrics are informed by an intense longing for inner peace and purity, and for a tranquil intellectual life. The sojourn in Italy leads to a series of sensuous but calm Renaissance poems, and these are succeeded by the poetry of his later years, full of wisdom, sincere, and universal in their appeal and range. Goethe produced the best which German poetry offers, in the simple popular poem of grave and gay content, in gnomic verse, in the ode, and in the elegy and ballad. Also as an epic poet Goethe far surpasses his contemporaries and successors. As a dramatist his works yield to none in depth of content and in psychological truth. Among his dramas is *Faust*, his greatest work, the profoundest and richest in poetry of all the products of modern literature.

CHAPTER XVI

GOETHE'S CHIEF NARRATIVE AND DRAMATIC WORKS

GOETHE returned to Frankfort from Strasburg freed from the artificial, shallow tendencies of his early com-positions. He began at once from this new vantage ground to dramatize the autobiography of a German hero, Götz von Berlichingen (died 1562). After writing and rewriting many scenes and sketches, he published in 1773, at his own and Merck's private expense, the drama *Götz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand*,¹ the first and most perfect embodiment of the spirit of the Storm and Stress. As compared with Lessing's tragedy *Emilia Galotti*, which had appeared the year before, *Götz* is, in form, a step backward, as it is loosely put together, and shows the influence of the mistaken notions of Shakespeare's art which were held by the Storm and Stress poets. In content it is a long advance beyond almost all its predecessors on the German stage. It is a story of the rebellion which Götz, a mediæval robber knight, leads against the newly established law of dawning modern times; it is a story of transition, a stirring plea for freedom, and a defence of the oppressed. Thus, although the time of its action is the sixteenth century, it is an expression of the dominant spirit of its author's time, and therefore awoke a storm of delight. The fine delineation of character, the dramatic life of individual scenes, and the terse popular language also found appreciation,

"Götz von
Berlichin-
gen"
(1773).

¹ *Götz of Berlichingen with the Iron Hand.*

and these features of the play still invest *Götz* with interest and charm. Numerous imitators flooded the stage with dramas of chivalry, many of which at first found favor, but none of *Götz's* immediate successors proved itself of lasting value.

All the healthful elements of the Storm and Stress can be found in *Götz*, whereas Goethe's novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*¹ expresses the morbid super-sensitive feeling of the period. The story, in the form of letters, is that of an emotional youth who finds no outlet for his energies and who falls in love with a friend's betrothed; at last, when he can not check his passion, he takes his own life. The basis of the story as a whole was formed by emotional experiences in Goethe's own life; the unhappy married life of a friend and the suicide of an acquaintance were used only to heighten the general artistic effect. In writing *Werther*, Goethe wished chiefly to rid himself of troublous memories, not to exalt indulgence of feeling, but the sentimentality of the story made the strongest appeal to Goethe's contemporaries. Sentimentalism assumed a still more violent form than before under the contagion of the "Werther fever," and the success of the book was unparalleled. The average modern reader of *Werther* finds it difficult to put himself wholly into the emotional atmosphere of that time, but the novel has conspicuous lasting beauties: the inexorable consistency of Werther's inner development, the author's deep feeling for nature, his command of language, and the charming, thoroughly wholesome character of the heroine Lotte. *Werther* was translated into the language of every civilized nation and imitated again and again, with the greatest popular success in *Siegwart, eine Klostergeschichte*² (1776) by Martin Miller (1750-1814), a member of the Göttingen Hainbund.

¹ *The Sorrows of Young Werther.*

² *Siegwart, a Convent Tale.*

The tragedy *Egmont* goes back in its inception to Goethe's last year in Frankfort, but it was not finished until 1787, and did not appear until 1788. In vagueness of outline it resembles *Götz*, but it is more restrained in the expression of feeling, and in this respect stands close to the works of Goethe's mature art. *Egmont* is thus a convenient illustration of Goethe's period of transition as well as a notable drama in itself. It is a psychological, not an historical, drama, and so, contrary to what we might expect from the title, it does not present the struggle for freedom which *Egmont's* brave people, the Dutch, fought against the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, or even *Egmont* as he was in history; it is wholly concerned with the development of a more or less imaginary hero in varying fortunes. Fearless and frank, beloved by the people and happy in his love for Klärchen, a simple child of the middle class, *Egmont* refuses to heed the warnings of his cooler friends about the plots of the Spaniards against him, and falls a victim to his own overweening confidence in human nature. Liberty in the form of his beloved, who has preceded him in death, appears to him as he awaits the hour of his execution, and, thus assured of the future of his people, he goes to his doom a proud, unbowed martyr. The play is loosely constructed, but the characters of *Egmont* and Klärchen, and several realistic mob scenes have made the play a favorite with many Germans.

*Iphigenie auf Tauris*¹ was first written out in prose in 1779, four years after the first sketch of *Egmont*. Goethe afterward revised it twice, however, and finally finished it in iambic pentameter in Rome, December, 1786, publishing it the next year, and thus before *Egmont*. Goethe took the story of the play from Euripides's tragedy *Iphigenia among the Taurians*,

¹ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*.

"*Iphigenie auf Tauris*"
(1787).

but his own, original solution of the dilemma in which the leading characters are placed led Goethe to impart to his play a depth of feeling which made his *Iphigenie* a recreation. In both plays Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, has killed his mother on account of her part in the murder of his father and on account of her adultery; but the oracle of Apollo has promised that he will be released from the persecution of the avenging Furies, if he will secure an image of Diana from the goddess's temple on the Tauric Peninsula, and carry it away to Attica. When the plays open, he has just arrived in the land of the Taurians, where, unknown to him, his sister Iphigenia is a priestess of Diana. An old law which condemns all strangers on the peninsula to be sacrificed to Diana, commands Iphigenia to offer up her brother to the goddess, but the relationship between them is discovered, and they face the problem of flight. In the Greek play they plan to escape by means of trickery. Thoas, the Tauric king, discovers their deception, but the goddess Minerva intervenes in behalf of the fugitives; she permits their departure with the image and forces Thoas to submit. Goethe's solution of the problem is psychological, and arises from the character of the heroine. Her purity and nobility cure Orestes from the madness into which his crime has plunged him, in the very moment of his confession of his guilt to her. The deception of Thoas is naturally impossible to such a character as hers. Even at the risk of baffling their flight, Iphigenia implicitly tells the truth to Thoas, and he is so overwhelmed by the purity of her humanity that he permits their departure, and even blesses them at farewell; they leave the image behind, as they discover, by a new interpretation of the words of the oracle, that Apollo never intended it to be taken from the Taurians. In the simple dignity, in the restrained expression of passion, in the straightforward action of Goethe's

Iphigenie, we see the ideal of "noble simplicity and quiet dignity" which Goethe, following Winckelmann, found in Greek masterpieces. In the purity of its humanity, in its idealistic faith in mankind, in its devotion to self-forgetful works of regeneration and spiritual elevation, we see an ideal which is not Greek, but modern and Christian. *Iphigenie* is both a reflex of the refining influence of Frau von Stein and the first product of the complete classical maturity to which Goethe attained during his years in Italy; all traces of his Storm and Stress are now gone forever.

The first fragment of the drama *Torquato Tasso* was written in prose in 1780-81, and the revised drama in iambic pentameter between the spring of 1788 and July, 1789; it was published in 1790.

Tasso, in many respects the equal of *Iphigenie*, is also a study in psychology, the interest of the drama being still more concentrated upon the inner life of the characters. The scanty action of the play follows the biographical accounts, especially Serassi's life (1785) of the Italian poet Tasso, the author of the epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata*.¹ The scene and time of the play are the court of the prince Alfonso of Ferrara and the spring of 1575 during the period of the sixteenth-century Renaissance. However, the intellectual and emotional world which Goethe opens to us is really that of his own time and experience; his Italian court is really that of Karl August at Weimar. When the play opens, Tasso has just finished his famous epic, and the Duke's sister Lenore crowns him with the poet's laurel wreath. Antonio, the Duke's minister, considers the act an undue flattery, and the breach thus created between the man of the world and the poet grows wider and wider until Tasso one day draws his sword on his enemy. He is arrested and confined. At

¹ *Jerusalem Delivered*.

the Duke's bidding Antonio seeks a reconciliation, but Tasso is bitter and suspicious, and asks him to prove his sincerity by obtaining the Duke's permission for him to leave Ferrara. The Duke consents, and Tasso prepares to leave all those most dear to him, but when the parting from the Princess comes, he is overcome by his emotion, and confesses his love for her. She rejects his suit, and thus he seems forsaken by all. In his distress he turns to Antonio, and finds a friend in this practical man of everyday life. *Tasso* is, first of all, a play of inner struggles and experiences, a reflection of Goethe's many battles with himself in his relations with Frau von Stein; it also suggests his bitter experiences in the clash between his official duties and his enemies at court on the one hand, and his poetic impulses on the other. Goethe succeeded finally in reconciling these two forces in his life, and thus he developed within himself the harmonious unity of a great personality. In the drama Goethe suggests in the closing lines that the external conflict between the poet and the man of the world is to be settled by a friendly, complementary union of the two. Tasso, noble in feeling but spoiled and weak in disposition, rises above his inner conflict and distress when he realizes the necessity of curbing his passions, and resolves to face the realities of life like a man. Goethe was deeply wounded by the lack of interest with which his country received this thoughtful, delicate creation and the other plays which he published during these years, *Iphigenie*, *Egmont*, and the *Faust* fragment (1790). He did not realize that he was offering his people an art for which they were not prepared; in the refined Renaissance art of *Tasso* especially, there was too little that was directly comprehensible and popular. Schiller reawakened in him the desire to create for his own time. At Schiller's urging he again took up the German and native along with elements of life and culture

which he found in classical antiquity and in the Renaissance.

Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre,¹ a novel which was begun in 1777 and finished in 1796, is a story of education and mental development. Wilhelm, a rich merchant's son, goes forth into the world, without any definite plan in mind, to acquire the proper training and culture for life, and finds at last through personal experience and observation that the goal is to be attained, not by idly yielding to passing inclinations, but by earnestly devoting one's self to high moral endeavor. For the first time since Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* a German poet here attempts to present a large picture of contemporaneous society. In many ways it was a narrow life which the middle classes led in those days, excluded as they were from any appreciable political activity, but an earnest desire for higher intellectual culture permeated the whole nation. This desire Goethe has expressed enduringly both by fine characterization and by the discussions carried on between various personages in his story. The theatre and the drama occupy a very prominent place in the novel. Wilhelm's most vital experiences are due to his association with theatrical people, and a discussion of *Hamlet* in the course of the story is one of the most valuable contributions to the interpretation of Shakespeare ever written by a German. The deep interest which Goethe here shows in the stage as a school for culture was characteristic of the time and of other leading authors, especially of Lessing, Schiller, and Tieck. *Wilhelm Meister* is in general a distinct poetic reflection of Goethe's own life, his errors and changes, his varied experiences and growth. The romantic poetical figures of Mignon and the harper are two of the most famous which Goethe ever created;

" Wilhelm
Meisters
Lehrjahre "
(1796).

¹ *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.*

they and their lyrics were sacred treasures to later Romantic poets. The introspection of its characters and the emphasis which it lays on inner life and on growth through experience in the world, give *Wilhelm Meister* a place of fundamental importance in the history of German fiction. We can connect it through its introspective elements with *Werther* and many other German novels of the eighteenth century on the one hand, and on the other, as we shall see, its story of character development was a standard for Romantic and other novelists far down into the nineteenth century. The *Lehrjahre* was followed by a

"Wilhelm
Meisters
Wander-
jahre"
(1829).

sequel, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre oder die Entsagenden*,¹ the first part of which appeared in 1821 and the whole in 1829. The aging author wished to amplify the somewhat incomplete description of middle-class life which he had attempted in the preceding novel, but the story-teller yields unconsciously to the philosopher, to the friend of mankind, to the pedagogue and prophet. As a story, this sequel has no interest, but it contains some of Goethe's most fruitful ideas on social ethics. Carlyle enthuses over its "high, melodious Wisdom," and says, "the purest spirit of all Art rests over it and breathes through it." Several short stories which Goethe interwove in it are models of their kind.

The very next year after the publication of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Goethe again came forward with a picture of middle-class life, *Hermann und Dorothea*, a minutely accurate and yet poetical picture of life among the lower middle classes.

"Hermann
und Doro-
thea"
(1797).

Goethe wrote the greater part of this little epic in September, 1796, and March, 1797, at a time when he was in constant association with Schiller; he completed it in June,

¹ *Wilhelm Meister's Travels, or the Resigned.*

1797, and published it in the following October. It is written in the classical hexameter, which had long since become familiar in German poetry through poems by Klopstock, Voss, and Goethe himself. The kernel of the poem was an incident which was said to have happened in Bavaria in 1732; the son of a prosperous citizen falls in love with a religious refugee from Salzburg, and marries her. Goethe, however, makes the heroine a fugitive from the country west of the Rhine at the time of the French Revolution, about August, 1796, and locates the scene of the story on the often-threatened east bank of the Rhine. Thus he reflects in a narrow frame the great movements and changes of his own generation, and he is able to introduce into the limited range of the action vivid historical contrasts such as then existed between authority and the rights of the individual to determine his own fate; between duty to the limited sphere of one's birth, and the impulse to larger life; between orderly growth and sudden revolution; between the idea of fatherland and that of cosmopolitanism. The poet shows how love transforms a youth into a man, and what a rich blessing rests upon orderly, though lowly, human endeavor; with his unobtrusive, consummate art he also presents a series of living characters who unfold a rich and wholesome spiritual life. The larger background and the introduction of questions of universal human significance are a great advance beyond Voss's *Luise*. This miniature of rural and domestic life had been Goethe's first inspiration, but Voss's translation of Homer and the *Prolegomena ad Homerum*¹ by Friedrich August Wolf had spurred him to a new study of Homeric poetry, especially of the *Odyssey*, which was even more beneficial than *Luise* in its effects on *Hermann und Dorothea*. Through this study he achieved the dig-

¹ *Observations Introductory to the Study of Homer.*

nity and lucid objectivity of his epic. In spite of these classical elements, however, *Hermann und Dorothea* is thoroughly popular and national. With the exception of *Faust* and *Wilhelm Tell*, it is the most widely read product of German literature.

Apart from the completion of *Wilhelm Meister* Goethe's last novel is *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*,¹ in which he illustrates the truth of Christ's words, *Whosoever looketh upon*

"Die Wahl-
verwandt-
schaften"
(1809).

a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Eduard and

Charlotte, who loved each other in their youth, have been separated by circumstances, and now as widower and widow they meet again and are married. Their union is apparently happy, but it is rather one of friends than of lovers. They realize the falseness of their situation when a Captain and Charlotte's foster-daughter Ottilie enter their lives; Eduard is drawn to Ottilie, and Charlotte to the Captain, just as chemical elements with inherent, elective affinities are drawn to each other. The Captain resists temptation, and leaves Eduard's house. Eduard wants a separation from his wife, and when this is denied to him he goes off to war and tries, in vain, to forget Ottilie. The child of Eduard and Charlotte, whose resemblance to the Captain and Ottilie is further testimony to the affinities of its parents, is drowned through Ottilie's carelessness. This accident awakens Ottilie to a recognition of her moral transgression, and she renounces Eduard forever, even if he might become free to marry her. Overcome by the shock of all that has happened, she falls ill and soon dies. Eduard follows her in death shortly after. Goethe's purpose in telling this story was to show that passion may enter the lives of morally upright people with elemental force, and only in so far as the individual can practise man's high-

¹ *Elective Affinities.*

est virtue and duty, renunciation, is he worthy of life. Thus the novel afforded a counterbalance to the stories in which Romantic authors of the time championed the absolute liberty and rights of the individual. The artistic construction of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, its proportion and symmetry, its uncompromising, classic development of the moral problem at stake, make the novel one of Goethe's most finished psychological masterpieces.

Goethe's gift in epic art which he had already displayed in *Hermann und Dorothea* was attested once more in his autobiography *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit*.¹ Goethe began to plan it in (1811-33). 1808; the first three parts, or the first fifteen books, appeared in 1811-14, the last part, which includes five books, appeared in 1833. Goethe's first object was to tell the chronological origin of his works as certain inner connections between them had led to their arrangement in the edition of 1806-08; his next object was to describe in a connected manner the external and temperamental circumstances which had inspired his works, the literary models which influenced them, and their underlying theoretical principles. The story of his life is brought down to his departure from Frankfort in 1775. With a most attractive style the greatest man of his time describes not only his own human and poetic development, but also the social, intellectual, literary, and public life of this period in so far as it affected him for good or ill. However, time had faded many memories and distorted many experiences when Goethe wrote, so that his autobiography is not to be read as reliable history. Moreover, with a fine sense of proportion, though without any conscious violation of fact, Goethe arranged the events of his life in such a way

¹ *From My Life. Poetry and Truth.*

as to form a balanced, artistic whole. He thus treated his own life like an artist, as he treated every other subject. Various other works of Goethe's can be considered as supplements to this chief source of his biography, *Briefe aus der Schweiz*,¹ *Italienische Reise*² (1816-17), *Campagne in Frankreich 1792*³ (1822), *Belagerung von Mainz*,⁴ *Schweizerreise*,⁵ that is, his third trip to Switzerland, *Reise am Rhein, Main und Neckar*,⁶ *Tag- und Jahreshefte*⁷ extending to 1822, many biographical notes, and his letters and conversations.

The greatest product of the poetic imagination in modern times is Goethe's *Faust, eine Tragödie*.⁸ In its present complete form it is a work in two parts, but it was first published in fragments. *Faust, ein Fragment*⁹ appeared in 1790; the First Part, which included the earlier publication, in 1808; the *Helena* episode in 1827; and the Second Part, which repeated the *Helena* as its third act, in 1832 after Goethe's death. The beginnings, especially the tragedy of Gretchen, go back to the Storm and Stress period of the early seventies. The years of Goethe's friendship with Schiller, particularly from 1797 to 1801, marked a great advance: the conception of the larger plan in two parts, and the execution of the scenes which, like girders, hold the huge structure together, the prologue in heaven, the compact between Faust and Mephistopheles, and Faust's death and redemption as Goethe first presented them. The First Part was fin-

"Faust"
(1790-1832).
Its Composi-
tion.

¹ *Letters from Switzerland.*

² *Travels in Italy.*

³ *The Campaign in France in 1792.*

⁴ *The Siege of Mainz.*

⁵ *A Journey in Switzerland.*

⁶ *A Journey along the Rhine, Main, and Neckar.*

⁷ *Diaries and Journals.*

⁸ *Faust, a Tragedy.*

⁹ *Faust, a Fragment.*

ished in 1806; the Second Part, which was begun in 1800, advanced most rapidly between 1825 and 1831; on the 22d of July, 1831, eight months before his death, Goethe finished *Faust*, a life-work more literally than any other product of literature.

The main source of Goethe's *Faust* was a legend of the Reformation period dealing with Dr. Johann Faust, an adventurous magician of the sixteenth century.

Its Main
Source.

The legend tells how the universal human impulse after the knowledge of things unseen can lead to a falling away from God, to a league with the devil, and to everlasting damnation. The first chap-book on Dr. Faust appeared in 1587; it told of a number of magic tricks played by the sorcerer, of his compact with the evil one, and of his punishment. On the basis of this story the Englishman Christopher Marlowe wrote a tragedy, *Doctor Faustus*, about 1590, and this, through the agency of the English Comedians, became the source of a popular German drama which has lived on into present times in the form of a puppet-play. Goethe when a boy knew this play as well as the chap-book. Lessing tried to dramatize the Faust legend and work out a reconciliatory conclusion, in order to show that the impulse toward a knowledge of the supernatural was not given to man for his destruction; but he never carried out his sketch. Afterward, at one time or another, Müller and Klinger tried their hands at the story. Only Goethe, however, succeeded in giving it an impressive form. He interpreted the legend as Lessing did, but he moulded it into a work that is incomparable in its poetic beauty and wealth of wisdom.

After a prelude which is not a part of the action, and only prepares us to consider the drama as an artistic whole, the play begins with a prologue in heaven. God Himself appears, and gives the devil Mephistopheles the permission to tempt Faust from his striving after higher

things; He knows that a man of good intent, even if he often errs, always remains conscious of the right path.

The Story of
the First
Part.

In the First Part of the play proper Faust surrenders himself to Mephisto, unconscious, of course, of the latter's understanding with God, and enters into a compact with him. If the devil succeeds in killing his lofty ambitions and in satisfying him with earthly pleasures, Faust's soul is to be forfeited to him:

“Werd’ ich zum Augenblicke sagen:
Verweile doch! du bist so schön!
Dann magst du mich in Fesseln schlagen,
Dann will ich gern zu Grunde gehn!”¹

Thereupon Mephisto leads him first into the gay life of students who are assembled in Auerbach's Cellar in Leipzig. When Faust is only repelled by it, the devil decides to infatuate him with sensual pleasures of another kind. He therefore bids him drink a magic potion in the Witches' Kitchen; thus Faust's youth is restored, and his slumbering passions are aroused. Mephisto now leads him into the path of an innocent young girl, and there begins the famous Gretchen tragedy. At every moment Faust is conscious of the abyss into which he is on the point of hurling Gretchen, but he can not long control himself; Gretchen gives herself to him soul and body. Her brother Valentin falls in a duel with Faust, and the consequent uproar forces Faust to flee from the city. Gretchen forsaken becomes a mother, and in the madness of despair kills her child. She awaits the day of execution in prison. Faust, who has been kept by Mephisto in the wild distrac-

¹ “When thus I hail the moment flying:
‘Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!’
Then bind me in thy bonds undying,
My final ruin then declare!”

tions of Walpurgis-Night, returns to save her. But she rejects freedom, she longs for death to atone for her guilt, at least on earth. When Faust attempts to take her away by force, she turns from him with a shudder, and commends her soul to the judgment of God. Thus she is saved, because God can pardon. Faust, however, must follow Mephisto. Only Gretchen's yearning cry to him, "Heinrich, Heinrich!" with which the First Part ends, suggests a love transcending death.

The Second Part, in which Faust gradually escapes from the control of Mephisto, first shows us Faust after he has fallen asleep from the torments of conscience; his healing is accomplished by kindly elves who shroud the past with the veil of oblivion. When Faust awakes, the "little world" of personal emotion and experience is past, and he feels permeated with new life. Mephisto now leads him into the "great world," first, to the Imperial Court, where he hopes to give contentment to Faust's soul through worldly splendor and honor. Faust's first step toward this goal is the financial relief which he gives the emperor by the invention, with Mephisto's aid, of paper money. Faust then appears in a merry masquerade as an enchanter, which leads the emperor to demand new amusement; he wants to behold the spirits of Paris and Helena. Mephisto can not produce them, because heathen live in a hell of their own, but he gives Faust a magic key which opens the terrifying realm of the "mothers," mysterious divinities who are the creators of the primeval forms of all things. Without the assistance of Mephisto, but with the aid he has received from the "mothers," Faust conjures up the original forms of Paris and Helena. Overcome by the exalted beauty of the latter, Faust touches her, the spirits vanish, and Mephisto bears him fainting from the court and back to his old dwelling of the First Part of the play. Homunculus, a manikin

The Story of
the Second
Part.

which Faust's former body-servant Wagner has produced with the assistance of Mephisto, takes Faust still in a daze to the Pharsalian fields of Greece, where the spirits of Greek mythology are celebrating the classical Walpurgis-Night. Faust looks for Helena everywhere, but in vain. He then descends into the lower world to demand the surrender of Helena from Persephone, the mistress of Hades. The scene changes, and we see Helena, who has been reawakened in some mysterious way, and her attendants, captive Trojan women; they are returning home from over the sea, and are about to enter the palace of Menelaus in Sparta. Mephisto suddenly appears disguised as a serving-woman, and announces that Menelaus intends to sacrifice Helena and her companions. He offers rescue, the protection of a foreign prince, Faust, who has established a domain in the mountains. Helena and her maids are transported thither, and here she and Faust are married, a symbolic union of classic and romantic art, of antiquity and the Middle Ages. From their union springs a son, Euphorion, who at once develops into a youth, and, filled with untried energy, finds a sudden death through too bold a flight; thus Goethe symbolizes the poetry which follows genius alone and overleaps the bounds of human custom and capacity, in part an allusion to Lord Byron. Helena follows her son into the lower world. Faust, who had hardly become conscious of his happiness, sees himself alone again, and is borne back to his home by Helena's garments, now in the form of clouds. Thus, even what Faust had thought would be the highest, noblest enjoyment has proved an illusion, but it has been a wholesome experience, and it has given him new zest. He longs for a life of vigorous, large activity. He sees now "the Deed is everything, the Glory naught." Mephisto must help him, although he notes that Faust is outgrowing him more and more by such yearnings. The emperor has fallen by

Mephisto's machinations into still greater troubles; a rival emperor has arisen against him. Through Mephisto's magic the latter is defeated, and in gratitude the emperor gives Faust the requested strip of barren seashore which Faust intends to transform into a splendid domain. Faust's last appearance is as a gray old man. A great tract of land has been reclaimed, to Faust's sorrow partly through Mephisto's help, and not without wrongs to others. As Faust meditates over these wrongs, the gray figure Worry¹ approaches and blinds him. Nevertheless the light of undimmed enthusiasm still glows. Faust wishes to crown his work by draining a large swamp without the aid of magic, and to make his realm a safe habitation for a great colony of free, industrious men. But a higher power intervenes. Faust commands the supervisor of his work, Mephisto in disguise, to have the work on the ditch begun, but the subject spirits dig Faust's grave. He is at the end of life before he has reached full spiritual satisfaction. Faust sees that the day might come when, having trusted only his own human strength, he might finish his work and thus attain to his high goal; in anticipation of that day he now enjoys the bliss of a moment to which he might say, "Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!" And thus he dies. Mephisto seems to have won, but the noble enjoyment which Faust means, Mephisto could not and can not procure for him. He wins it in spite of the devil and for himself, by unresting activity for the good of others. Mephisto could not for long draw him aside from the right path. Therefore angels rescue Faust's immortal part from the furious devil, and bear it aloft to heaven, where Gretchen, who is now a holy penitent, intercedes for him with the Queen of Heaven, the personification of pitying divine love. At the Virgin's bidding Gretchen soars

¹ *Sorge*, i. e., "Worry" or "Care."

before her new-found love up to higher spheres. The angels sing,

“‘Wer immer strebend sich bemüht
Den können wir erlösen.’
Und hat an ihm die Liebe gar
Von oben Theil genommen,
Begegnet ihm die selige Schaar
Mit herzlichem Willkommen.”¹

Thus, the gospel of altruistic endeavor, for this is *Faust*, ends with a deep religious note.

¹ “Whoe’er aspires unweariedly
Is not beyond redeeming.
And if he feels the grace of Love
That from On High is given,
The Blessed Hosts, that wait above,
Shall welcome him to Heaven!”

CHAPTER XVII

SCHILLER. MINOR AUTHORS OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

JOHANN CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH SCHILLER was born at Marbach in Würtemberg, November 10, 1759. His father, Johann Kaspar Schiller, a surgeon, took part in the Seven Years' War, first as a lieutenant and later as a captain. In 1761 he was transferred to Cannstatt, and three years after to Lorch, where the poet received his first education in the primary school and from the village pastor, Moser, whom he afterward immortalized in his play *Die Räuber*.¹ Toward the end of 1766 the family removed to Ludwigsburg, and the following year Schiller entered the Latin School. His father gave him a taste for history, but various religious poets, Gellert, Haller, Klopstock, and others, who were favorites of his mother's, made a still deeper impression upon him. He wrote Latin and German verses at a very tender age, and as early as 1772 he was writing Biblical tragedies after the model of Klopstock. He soon determined to study theology, but he had to give up the plan when, in 1773, the Duke of Würtemberg, Karl Eugen, forced him to enter the new military school at the palace Solitude, near Stuttgart, and prepare for the legal profession. The separation from his family, the life in barracks, and the pedantic discipline of the school were bitter hardships to his sensitive disposition; aside from personal friendships, the only alleviation of his misery was the secret study of the works of Gersten-

Schiller
(1759-1805).

His Early
Life and
Young
Manhood:
1759-85.

His
Education.

¹ *The Robbers*.

berg, Lessing, Goethe, and other writers of the time. However, the seclusion from the outer world became less strict after November, 1775; the school was then transferred to Stuttgart, where it was known as the Karlsschule. Medicine was now added to the other branches of instruction, and Schiller at once took it up in place of law. Continued reading—Klinger, Leisewitz, Schubart, Bürger, Rousseau, Plutarch, and Shakespeare, the latter of whom swept him along “like a mighty mountain torrent”—inspired Schiller to original creations. From 1777 on he was writing intermittently at *Die Räuber*, expressing in it, as in all his lyrical and dramatic work of these years, that longing for liberty which he felt personally throughout his school-days, and which had been strengthened by his knowledge of the cruel imprisonment of Schubart. With all his rebelliousness, however, Schiller devoted himself to his studies with sufficient zeal to be honored in a distribution of prizes at the end of the school year, December 14, 1779; the ceremony was witnessed by Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimar and Goethe. A year later Schiller handed in two theses to the faculty of the Karlsschule, one of them on the connection between man’s animal and spiritual nature, and on the basis of them he received his diploma.

Schiller settled in Stuttgart as an army surgeon. In the full enjoyment of a larger measure of liberty he wrote his Laura odes, in imitation of Petrarch, to the coquettish widow Luise Vischer, published them and numerous other poems in his *Anthologie auf das Jahr 1782*,¹ and finished his play *Die Räuber* (1781). At the request of Dalberg, the manager of the theatre in Mannheim, Schiller recast his play, and in this altered form it was produced with phenomenal success in Mannheim, January 13, 1782. Schiller was present at the performance, but incognito, as he had left Stuttgart

His Years of
Wandering
and Distress.

¹ *Anthology for the Year 1782.*

without securing permission from the Duke. He began another play, *Fiesco*, almost immediately. A second trip to Mannheim, without permission, the last of May, brought the anger of the Duke down on him, the command to make no further journeys outside the duchy, and a fortnight's arrest, which Schiller turned to profit in work on *Fiesco* and in planning a third play called later *Kabale und Liebe*.¹ Directly after, the Duke received a protest from the Swiss canton of the Grisons against a passage in the *Räuber* in which Schiller had spoken of the Grisons as "the Athens of modern black-legs." The Duke angrily decreed that Schiller was to write no more "comedies" on pain of dismissal from the army. The continued disfavor of the Duke finally determined Schiller, directly after the completion of *Fiesco*, to escape from tyranny through flight. On the 22d of September, 1782, accompanied by his faithful friend Andreas Streicher, he vanished from Stuttgart. Two days later he arrived in Mannheim, but, in the absence of Dalberg, he did not feel safe here from the Duke's requisition, and soon wandered on with Streicher to Sachsenhausen, a village across the Main from Frankfort. Dalberg refused to accept *Fiesco*, but Schiller worked on at his new play with undiminished enthusiasm, and soon began a revision of *Fiesco*. In the middle of October the two friends went to Oggersheim, a village near Mannheim, where they lived in a miserable little inn. Here work on *Kabale und Liebe* was continued, and the new version of *Fiesco* completed. When the latter was again refused by Dalberg, Schiller decided to follow a plan suggested by Frau von Wolzogen, the mother of a school friend. So, after a meeting with his mother and sister Christophine in Bretten, and after a painful farewell from Streicher in Worms, the wretched poet found a refuge on the Wolzogen estate in Bauerbach near Meiningen. He remained

¹ *Cabal and Love*.

in this idyllic neighborhood from December, 1782, to July, 1783, finishing *Kabale und Liebe* in February and beginning the tragedy *Don Carlos* in March. Meanwhile, since there seemed no reason for further fearing Karl Eugen, Dalberg changed his attitude toward Schiller, and invited him to Mannheim. Schiller returned in July, and in the following month he began a year's contract with Dalberg as "theatre poet." In November, Schiller completed a second revision of *Fiesco*, but even in this form it was produced in January, 1784, with mediocre success. The effect of *Kabale und Liebe* in April, however, was all the more marked. Nevertheless, Dalberg refused to renew his contract with Schiller, and the poet now experienced great distress in earning a living. His condition was not alleviated by the foundation of a periodical *Die Rheinische Thalia*;¹ the issue of March, 1785, containing Schiller's treatise on the stage as a moral force, was the only number which ever appeared. Nor was a reading of selections from *Don Carlos* before the princely court in Darmstadt any more beneficial financially; its only result was the title Ducal Councillor which was conferred on Schiller by one of the guests present, Karl August of Saxe-Weimar. This audience had been secured through a French officer's wife, Charlotte von Kalb, who was living in Mannheim and who awakened a deep passion in Schiller during the winter of 1784-85. The torments of this unwholesome love, his debts, his wretched health in the bad climate, and his dissension with Dalberg depressed his spirits, and finally made him desperate to leave Mannheim. He therefore joyfully accepted an offer of hospitality from Christian Gottfried Körner (1756-1831), who had evinced his admiration for Schiller by a friendly letter as early as May, 1784, and on the 9th of April the poet left Mannheim for Leipsic.

¹ *The Rhenish Thalia.*

Schiller arrived in Leipsic after a most fatiguing journey April 17, 1785. Körner, a generous, open-hearted friend

**Years of
Study and
Clarification:
1785-94.**

**His Life with
Körner and
First Resi-
dence in
Weimar.**

of Schiller's to the end, as their correspondence shows, was now in Dresden, the law councillor of the church Consistory. However, he made provision for the poet in Leipsic and in the near-by village Gohlis, where Schiller spent the following summer, and, above all, he paid Schiller's debts. Schiller followed his friend to Dresden in September, remaining as Körner's guest, either in the town house or in Körner's villa at Loschwitz, until July, 1787. These two years formed one of the happiest periods in Schiller's life; he was now free from all financial worry, and he had in Körner both a sympathetic friend and an appreciative, capable critic of his work. This friendship inspired the splendid ode *An die Freude*,¹ which Schiller wrote in November, 1785, and which was afterward the inspiration, in part, of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The story *Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre*² was written at this time also, the drama *Der Menschenfeind*³ and the novel *Der Geisterseher*⁴ were begun, and in 1787 *Don Carlos* was finished; all these works appeared in *Die Thalia*, a periodical which Schiller published from 1786 to 1791. Studies in history inspired Schiller to plan an account of the defection of the Netherlands from Spain in the sixteenth century, and his discussions with Körner on æsthetics led him to the composition of his *Philosophische Briefe*.⁵ In July, 1787, Schiller removed from Dresden to Weimar. The Duke was then not at his capital, and Goethe was in Italy, but Schiller met a cordial welcome from Wieland, Herder, the Dowager Duchess Anna Amalia, and others. The following December, after a

¹ *To Joy.*

² *The Misanthrope.*

⁵ *Philosophical Letters.*

³ *The Criminal from Lost Honor.*

⁴ *The Ghost-seer.*

visit to Frau von Wolzogen, he spent a few days in Rudolstadt at the home of Frau von Lengefeld, where he met his future wife, Charlotte (1766–1826), the daughter of his hostess. In 1788 appeared the first and only volume of the *Abfall der vereinigten Niederlande*¹ which Schiller ever finished. The first part of this volume and the poem *Die Götter Griechenlands*,² the earliest testimony of Schiller's leaning toward the classics, were printed at the same time in Wieland's *Der teutsche Merkur*³ for March, 1788. Schiller spent the summer and autumn of 1788 at Volkstedt near Rudolstadt in company with the Lengefelds, studying history, Homer, and Euripides, and working at his profoundly thoughtful poem *Die Künstler*,⁴ which he completed the following February. His meeting with Goethe, September 7, in Rudolstadt, did not lead to an immediate friendship, but toward the end of the year Goethe caused the appointment of Schiller as a professor of history at the university in Jena. After Schiller had translated *Iphigenia in Aulis* and various scenes from *The Phœnician Women* by Euripides, he continued his study of history with great diligence, and settled in Jena early in May, 1789.

Schiller delivered his inaugural lecture in Jena on the study of universal history, May 26–27, 1789. His betrothal to Charlotte von Lengefeld in August was followed, February 22, 1790, in spite of his small income, by their marriage in the village church at Wenigenjena, a suburb of the university town. Schiller now began his *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges*,⁵ which appeared 1791–93, and conceived the idea of writing a tragedy about the famous general of that war Wallenstein, or Waldstein. Frequent illness, which proved to be the beginnings of

First Years
in Jena.

¹ *The Revolt of the United Netherlands.*

² *The Gods of Greece.*

³ *The German Mercury.*

⁴ *The Artists.*

⁵ *History of the Thirty Years' War.*

consumption, and financial worries clouded the otherwise perfect happiness of Schiller's married life; but from December, 1791, his distress was much relieved by the generosity of Count Schimmelmann and Duke Christian of Holstein-Augustenburg, who gave him an annuity of some seven hundred dollars for three years. Kant's *Kritik der Urteilkraft*¹ had turned him, in March, 1791, to the study of philosophy, and while he was reading in this new field, he translated portions of Virgil, finished the *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges*, and, in 1792-93, published the periodical *Die neue Thalia*. The reading of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Kant's work just mentioned, the starting-point of his theories on æsthetics, resulted in the philosophical essays *Über die tragische Kunst*² (1792), *Über Anmut und Würde*³ (1793), and *Über das Erhabene*⁴ (1793). In company with his wife Schiller visited Karlsbad in 1791, Dresden and his friend Körner in 1792 and his native duchy from August, 1793, to May, 1794. Schiller's letters to the Duke of Augustenburg on æsthetic education were written mainly during this journey. While Schiller was in Stuttgart, from March to May, he sketched the outline of *Wallenstein*. In Tübingen he became acquainted with the philosopher Fichte and with the publisher Cotta. The latter agreed to pay Schiller a considerable sum for editing an æsthetic monthly to be called *Die Horen*⁵ and as royalty on his works; thus the poet was permanently released from his former acute worry about money. The travellers returned to Jena May 15.

In the summer of 1794, when Schiller requested Goethe to contribute to *Die Horen* (published 1795-98), he won Goethe completely, and thus established a friendship which was the capstone of his happiness. With whole-hearted

¹ *Critique of Judgment.*

³ *On Winsomeness and Dignity.*

⁵ *The Hours.*

² *On Tragic Art.*

⁴ *On the Sublime.*

admiration of Goethe's genius, Schiller entered into a friendly rivalry with him. Under Goethe's influence Schiller's philosophical studies waned, and the main end of his life became the poetical application of the views which he had acquired through the study of Kant; his association with Goethe, as their letters bear witness, completed Schiller's poetical artistic development. The classical little treatise *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*¹ was written in 1794. It was followed by deeply thoughtful poems of wonderful beauty of form, *Die Macht des Gesanges*,² *Die Ideale*,³ *Würde der Frauen*,⁴ *Das Ideal und das Leben*,⁵ and *Der Spaziergang*⁶ in 1795; *Das Mädchen aus der Fremde*,⁷ *Pompeji und Herkulanum*,⁸ *Klage der Ceres*,⁹ *Dithyrambe*, the *Xenien* and *Votivtafeln*¹⁰ written jointly with Goethe, and *Die Erwartung*¹¹ in 1796; the ballads *Der Taucher*,¹² *Der Handschuh*,¹³ *Der Ring des Polykrates*,¹⁴ *Die Kraniche des Ibykus*,¹⁵ and *Der Gang nach dem Eisenhammer*¹⁶ in 1797; the ballads *Der Kampf mit dem Drachen*¹⁷ and *Die Bürgschaft*¹⁸ and the more lyrical poems *Das eleusische Fest*¹⁹ and *Nänie* in 1798; *Das Lied von der Glocke*²⁰ in 1799; *Hero und Leander* in 1801; *Kassandra* in 1802, and *Der Graf von Habsburg*²¹ and *Das Siegesfest*²² in 1803. Most of these poems appeared first in the *Musenalmanach* which Schiller published from 1796 to 1800. A little house and garden which Schiller bought

His Last
Years:
1794-1805.

His Friend-
ship with
Goethe.

¹ *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry.*

² *The Ideals.*

⁵ *The Ideal and Life.*

⁷ *The Maiden from Afar.*

⁹ *The Lament of Ceres.*

¹¹ *Expectation.*

¹³ *The Glove.*

¹⁵ *The Cranes of Ibycus.*

¹⁷ *The Fight with the Dragon.*

¹⁹ *The Eleusinian Festival.*

²¹ *The Count of Habsburg.*

² *The Power of Song.*

⁴ *The Dignity of Woman.*

⁶ *The Walk.*

⁸ *Pompeii and Herculaneum.*

¹⁰ *Votive Tablets.*

¹² *The Diver.*

¹⁴ *The Ring of Polycrates.*

¹⁶ *The Walk to the Forge.*

¹⁸ *The Pledge.*

²⁰ *The Song of the Bell.*

²² *The Festival of Victory.*

in the spring of 1797 was the birthplace both of the poems written between 1797 and 1799, and of *Wallenstein*, Schiller's greatest drama. Schiller began the writing of the latter October 22, 1796, and finished it March 17, 1799; *Wallensteins Lager* ¹ was first performed October 12, 1798, *Die Piccolomini*, ² January 30, 1799, and *Wallensteins Tod*, ³ April 20, 1799. Early in December, 1799, Schiller was able to fulfil a desire of recent years by removing to Weimar, where he lived henceforth in close proximity to Goethe.

In Weimar Schiller first made a new stage version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and then finished *Maria Stuart*, a tragedy which he had begun in Jena in 1799; it was first presented in Weimar June 14, 1800, five days after its completion. *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* ⁴ was written between July, 1800, and May 16, 1801. The third production of this tragedy, in Leipsic, September 18, 1801, which Schiller attended on his return from a trip to Dresden, inspired the audience to an overwhelming ovation to the author. The year 1801 also saw the origin of the drama *Turandot*, a recasting of a play by the Italian Gozzi. Schiller bought a home in Weimar in 1802, and at the request of the Duke, he was raised to the nobility of the empire. After many interruptions Schiller completed the tragedy *Die Braut von Messina*, ⁵ February 1, 1803, the first performance following on the 19th of March. For his own recreation he then translated two French comedies by Picard, *Der Neffe als Onkel* ⁶ and *Der Parasit*. ⁷ In May he began the last drama which it was granted to him to finish, *Wilhelm Tell*, completed February 18, 1804, and first produced

¹ *Wallenstein's Camp.*

² *Wallenstein's Death.*

³ *The Bride of Messina.*

⁴ *The Parasite.*

⁵ *The Piccolominis.*

⁶ *The Maid of Orleans.*

⁷ *The Nephew as Uncle.*

in Weimar, March 17, with immense success. A week before this performance he had begun *Demetrius*, a tragedy based on events in Russian history. Schiller spent several weeks in April and May of the same year in Berlin at the suggestion of Iffland, who gave him hopes of a liberal stipend from the Prussian government in case he settled there. However, in spite of his cordial reception by the king and queen, Schiller finally remained in Weimar, where he felt bound by "gratitude, inclination, and friendship." The continuation of *Demetrius* was interrupted by frequent ill health, by the composition of the festival play *Die Huldigung der Künste*,¹ which he wrote in November, 1804, for the formal reception of the hereditary prince of Saxe-Weimar and his bride the Princess Maria Paulovna of Russia, and by the translation of Racine's *Phèdre*. On the 1st of May, 1805, he saw his friend Goethe and visited the theatre for the last time. Attacked by a violent fever, his frail body could make no further resistance. On the 9th of May Schiller quietly passed away, his mortal remains being buried in the churchyard of St. James in the night between the 11th and the 12th. Three months later, August 10, 1805, a commemorative scenic presentation of *Das Lied von der Glocke* was held in the summer theatre at Lauchstädt; Goethe's tribute to Schiller, *Epilog zu Schillers Glocke*,² was first recited on this occasion. Schiller's remains were afterward, December 16, 1827, transferred to the ducal mausoleum.

Schiller's life was a constant struggle: in his youth against despotic compulsion, then against financial want, and when he had at length won a position of independence and honor, against consuming disease, from which he had to wrench all his masterpieces, and which was able to conquer his spirit only by wrecking his body. To all this must be added his struggle for inner

Schiller as an
Ideal Man.

¹ *The Homage of the Arts.*

² *Epilogue to Schiller's "Bell."*

freedom and serenity against the intense passions of his temperament, and his struggle to embody in his own life the ideals of his poetry. The indomitable heroic character of Schiller's life constitutes his greatness as a man. He is still his nation's ideal of a man who by the sheer force of moral will rises triumphant over need and suffering.

"Through all the works of Schiller," says Goethe, "there runs the idea of liberty, and this idea assumed a

The Apostle
of Liberty.

different form as Schiller advanced in culture and became a new man. In his youth it was the personal liberty of the individual which occupied him in his own life, and which is expressed in his works; in his later life it was an ideal spiritual liberty." The truth of Goethe's observation is borne out by even a hasty consideration of Schiller's general poetic development. In the works of his youth there is the ferment of a fierce desire for political and social liberty. Immature and crude as these works are, their vehement passion nevertheless makes them notable products of a "divinely inspired impatience" of all external compulsion and oppression; they preach with remarkable eloquence Rousseau's idea that only the natural man is truly free. In the work on *Don Carlos* the poet rises from the revolutionary desire for absolute, personal liberty to an ideal of general political liberty, one of Schiller's most sublime, inspiring conceptions. The works of Schiller's classical period, finally, show the liberating effect of love of country and of a fight for the common weal against an abuse of power, thus, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* and *Wilhelm Tell*, rebellion against impotent hereditary power in *Wallenstein*, struggle against guilt and self-incurred doom in *Wallenstein*, *Die Braut von Messina*, and *Demetrius*, and triumph over the weakness of the flesh and earthly limitations in *Maria Stuart*. These later plays embody Kant's doctrine that not the sensuously natural, but the morally sensible man is truly free.

Schiller's lyric poems appear very limited in range beside the amazing variety of Goethe's poetry, but within their sphere they are not less remarkable. They achieve their effect less by the direct expression of feeling than by the artistic expression of philosophic thought. Schiller is rarely successful in simple songs, but he is a master in the so-called "reflective, philosophical lyric"; for example, *Der Spaziergang*¹ and *Das eleusische Fest*² contain magnificent pictures from the history of civilization, *Die Künstler*³ and *Das Ideal und das Leben*⁴ reflect the poet's thoughts on the relation between art and life, between the ideal and the real, and *Das Lied von der Glocke*⁵ presents a powerful series of typical scenes from life. Through the profound thought and through the glowing feeling of such poems as these Schiller won for his philosophical lyrics an eminent place in German poetry. The ballad was also used by Schiller as the vehicle of moral ideas; *Die Bürgschaft*⁶ exalts faithfulness, *Die Kraniche des Ibykus*⁷ is a story of divine justice, *Der Kampf mit dem Drachen*⁸ lauds victory over self, and *Der Taucher*⁹ presents love and ambition in conflict with the fear of God. Schiller also wrote many keen, pithy epigrams. He attains his best, however, in the drama, in which he of all German poets comes nearest to Shakespeare in the boldness of his conceptions and in popular effect. He is without a peer in German historical tragedy. His style is refined and full of feeling, majestic, rich in figures of speech, and melodious.

Schiller performed a worthy service to his country in his historical writings too, not through research and scientific method, but by the large conception and artistic execu-

¹ *The Walk.*

² *The Artists.*

³ *The Song of the Bell.*

⁷ *The Cranes of Ibycus.*

⁹ *The Diver.*

² *The Eleusinian Festival.*

⁴ *The Ideal and Life.*

⁶ *The Pledge.*

⁸ *The Fight with the Dragon.*

Schiller as a
Poet and
Dramatist.

tion of his themes. Through these characteristics he was an able second to Herder in giving the writing of history the impulse to the admirable literary form which it achieved in the nineteenth century. As a writer on philosophical subjects, Schiller expounds and develops Kant's moral doctrines, especially Kant's *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*.¹ He treats the relation between duty and inclination, between morality and passion, in his treatises as well as in his poetry and dramas. In the field of æsthetics he is an original continuator of the ideas which Kant set forth in his *Kritik der Urteilkraft*.² Schiller tries especially to fathom the nature and problems of poetic art; he aims to establish in poetry the relation between art and morality, the correct union of the ideal and the real, of seeming and being, of beauty and truth. To him art is the teacher of the human race, since it unites winsomeness and moral dignity; in their harmonious union consists supreme culture.

The dramas of Schiller's young manhood are the Storm and Stress itself. They are largely overdrawn and untrue, bombastic and crude. And yet they show a strong dramatic instinct. Passionate feeling and ardent longing for freedom from the oppressions of the time surge through them all and lift the hearer and reader over many repellent passages. *Die Räuber*,³ which was based on a story by Schubart and published anonymously in 1781 at the expense of the author, is the first of Schiller's pleas for freedom. Karl Moor, a victim of his own hot blood and the devilish intrigues of his brother Franz, loses all faith in the justice of mankind; as the leader of a band of robbers he tries to reform the world by acts of violence, and to assert the rights of man by lawlessness. He will not let

Schiller as an
Historian
and Writer
on Æsthetics.

Schiller's
Dramas.

"Die Räu-
ber"
(1781).

¹ *Critique of Practical Reason.*

² *Critique of Judgment.*

³ *The Robbers.*

his will be bound into the "strait-jacket of the law," because "law has never made a great man, whereas freedom begets Titans." He sees at last, however, that his way of regeneration leads to social chaos, and he "appeases the law which he has offended" by voluntarily surrendering himself to justice. The powerful effect which individual scenes in the play still exert, accounts in part for the enormous success of *Die Räuber* at a time when "freedom" and "liberty" were watchwords. Coleridge was so deeply moved by one of the scenes that he wrote a sonnet addressed *To the Author of "The Robbers."* Countless plays and novels on robber life written in imitation of *Die Räuber* sprang up all over Germany.

The tragedy of a republic *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua*¹ derives a considerable part of its importance from the fact that it is Schiller's first attempt in historical drama. It is an advance over *Die Räuber*, inasmuch as Schiller tries to depict historical characters and conditions, and to conceive a definite ideal of political freedom. On the other hand, Schiller does not justify sufficiently either the action of the play in general or the acts of individual characters, and the development of Fiesco's character is not clear and consistent. Herein lies perhaps the chief reason for the comparative failure of the drama in spite of such excellences as the delineation of Fiesco's foil Verrina and his accomplice the Moor.

Schiller's natural dramatic genius, inborn and as yet not completely developed, is most brilliantly displayed in his tragedy of middle-class life *Kabale und Liebe*;² thus he finally entitled the play at Iffland's suggestion instead of *Luise Millerin*, from the name of the heroine. The main theme is the same as in *Emilia Galotti*, the defencelessness of self-respecting middle-class people against the criminal designs of an egoistic, despotic

"Fiesco"
(1783).

"Kabale und
Liebe"
(1784).

¹ *The Conspiracy of Fiesco in Genoa.*

² *Cabal and Love.*

nobility; but the scene is boldly laid in Germany, and the treatment is thoroughly original. In the foreground stands the strong, pure love of a young couple from different social ranks, who fall in a conflict with narrow tradition and with the intrigues of court egoism. With all its exaggeration of language and character drawing the play is full of genuine passion, the movement of the action is direct and swift, and individual features, such as the character of Luise's father, an old musician, are of convincing truthfulness.

According to the original plan of 1783, Schiller's tragedy *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien*¹ was to have been a portrayal of a princely house, in which the "representation of the Spanish inquisition was to avenge prostituted humanity and pillory its wrongs"; the love of Prince Carlos (died 1568) for his stepmother Elisabeth was the only dramatic theme. But in the fragments of the first half of the play which were published in the *Thalia* in 1785-86, a political theme is added, the contrast between the gloomy despotism of Philip II and Alva on the one hand, and, on the other, the enthusiastic ideas of liberty and humanitarianism held by Carlos and his friend Posa. Before the completion of the play in 1787, Schiller's ideal of political liberty assumed a maturer, more finished form; not through bloody revolution, but through serious, profound thought and sensible counsel can human society be regenerated and the life of states be welded into a cosmopolitan unity. "Freedom of thought" is the gospel which the drama preaches through the mouth of Posa, and in this way it becomes a poetic expression of political enlightenment, just as *Nathan der Weise*, which was in Schiller's mind when he wrote the great scene between Posa and King Philip, is an expression of enlightened religious views. In the second half of the play the political theme occupies the foreground to such an extent that the

¹ *Don Carlos, Infante of Spain.*

whole subsequent development of the action and characters depends on it. The changed attitude on the part of the poet was distinctly unfavorable to the dramatic unity of the play; Posa, the champion of liberty, displaces Carlos, the lover, as the real hero. Compensation for this weakness in technic is to be found in the abundance of deep thought and in the dignified and yet impassioned language. *Don Carlos*, the first drama in which Schiller used iambic pentameter, is a favorite of the German nation, although in form and in dramatic content it stands only midway between the stormy ebullitions of Schiller's young manhood and the masterpieces of his mature years.

Stern self-discipline, the study of history, Kant, and the dramas of Shakespeare and the ancients, and the exchange of ideas with Goethe led Schiller to the acme of his art. The great work which stands at the threshold of his prime bears witness to the complete philosophical and artistic clarification of the poet. Ever since his study of the Thirty Years' War the mysterious figure of Wallenstein, or Waldstein, Duke of Friedland (died 1634), had fascinated Schiller, and challenged him to a poetic interpretation of its riddles. In 1791 he began to think about a tragedy *Wallenstein*, in 1794 he worked at an outline, in October, 1796, he wrote the first scenes, and in March, 1799, he finished the play. The mass of material forced him to double the traditional five acts, and to prefix an introductory play, the three parts receiving distinctive titles. As the prologue of the play indicates, *Wallensteins Lager*,¹ the first part, is intended to show the external circumstances which have lured Wallenstein into the ambitious scheme of seizing the kingdom of Bohemia from the emperor. These circumstances are, especially, the apparently unconditional devotion of the army to their commander-in-chief, and his regal position

"Wallenstein"
(1799).

¹ *Wallenstein's Camp*.

and influence. From the speeches of his soldiers we also learn the character of Wallenstein. The five acts of *Die Piccolomini*¹ bring events up to the capture of Wallenstein's messenger to the Swedes, the enemies of his emperor, without whose aid Bohemia can not be taken. That Wallenstein meditates high treason is now indisputably proven to his enemies by the papers found on his messenger. Favorable circumstances alone could not move Wallenstein to the decisive step, but now, with his designs known, he sees himself face to face with the necessity of a great decision. At the beginning of *Wallensteins Tod*² he wavers again at the idea of open treason, but ambition conquers; he closes the treaty with the Swedes. However, Octavio Piccolomini, the leader of the opposing forces and a man whom Wallenstein has trusted absolutely, persuades Wallenstein's generals to desert him; his best soldiers forsake him too, and with them Wallenstein's favorite and Octavio's son Max. A revengeful enemy of Wallenstein's, Buttler, becomes the tool of retribution; at Eger Wallenstein and his small band of faithful followers fall at the hands of Buttler's hired murderers. Octavio is punished by the death of Max; his elevation to princely rank, the emperor's reward for his treachery to his friend, seals his moral condemnation. Thus the "dramatic poem," as Schiller calls his tragedy, shows how a man who is a ruler by instinct, plots to reduce the power and dignity of a man who is a ruler only by inheritance and law; it further shows how this plot is wrecked, partly by the shred of reluctant respect which the plotter himself has for established authority, partly by the tenacity with which men at large cling to this authority. At the same time Wallenstein's fate marks how a man builds a wall about himself out of his own works, a wall which allows no turning, and how mere toying with criminal thoughts can lead to guilt

¹ *The Piccolominis.*

² *Wallenstein's Death.*

and retribution. Wallenstein falls, not through an unavoidable fate, but through his own fault; his belief in destiny drawn from his study of the stars is only a delusion. *Wallenstein* was the first German tragedy which treated an historical character with distinction in style and conception, and it therefore made a deep impression. The German stage was vastly ennobled by the acquisition of a play which possessed both popular effectiveness and classical finish. "Among the pale virtuous ghosts of the emotional drama of the time, the widely popular drama of Iffland, Kotzebue, and their kind, there now appeared," as Tieck has said, "Wallenstein's mighty spirit, majestic and terrible."

The difficulty which he had had in *Wallenstein* in getting at the purely human kernel of the story, aroused the desire in Schiller to treat a tragic theme which was simple and which appealed directly to the heart. He found such a theme in the story of Mary, Queen of Scots (died 1587). In spite of many interruptions by other work and by illness, he wrote his tragedy *Maria Stuart* between June, 1799, and June, 1800. The death sentence of the captive queen is drawn up at the very beginning of the drama, so that the climax of the action does not lie in the documentary condemnation of Mary, but in a meeting between her and Queen Elizabeth. Mary, at first humbly submissive, then stirred to a frenzy of passion by Elizabeth's heartless bearing toward her, hurls the most insulting truths in the face of her enemy. She thus triumphs for a moment, but she has pronounced her own death sentence; Elizabeth can never forgive this humiliation. By the steadfastness with which Mary bears her sufferings, and by the penitent resignation with which she goes to her death, she purifies herself of the dross of pride, of weakness, and of former transgressions; while her enemy, the despot, forsaken by her most faithful ad-

"*Maria
Stuart*"
(1800).

viser Shrewsbury and by her favorite Leicester, stands at the close of the drama morally convicted and condemned. However lacking in historical truth, *Maria Stuart* is one of the best dramatic narratives Schiller ever told, and of all his plays no other has been produced so often in foreign countries.

In his next drama Schiller, the German, undertook to cleanse the figure of the French national heroine Joan of Arc from the filth with which the Frenchman, Voltaire, had bespattered her in his burlesque epic *La Pucelle d'Orléans*¹ (1755). Schiller set to work at his *Jungfrau von Orleans*¹ with great enthusiasm, in July, 1800, and finished it in May, 1801, in less than ten months. He called it "a romantic tragedy," in order to imply that the marvellous and miraculous elements of the play are to be accepted and believed in with all the faith of the mediæval chivalrous time in which the play is laid, that is, about 1430, when the Maid captured Orléans. The works of the German Romanticists, who, as we shall presently see, had just become a factor in German literature, influenced Schiller undoubtedly in this use of romantic elements, in the artistic use of Catholic ideas, and in the admixture of lyrical verse measures. The tragedy is a glorification of religious exaltation and heroic patriotism. The simple country maiden Johanna goes forth firmly believing in her divine mission to rescue her country from the English, but in a combat she is untrue to her vow never to open her heart to earthly love, as she spares the Englishman Lionel in a moment of womanly feeling. She now sees in herself only an ordinary mortal, she considers herself no longer worthy to fulfil her high calling, and patiently bears false accusations. Wandering about in wretched despair, she is captured and delivered into the hands of the English; Lionel offers rescue, but she

"Die Jung-
frau von
Orleans"
(1801).

¹ *The Maid of Orleans*

thrusts him back. Through this renunciation her atonement is completed. Her faith and her miraculous strength return. She breaks the fetters of the English, and leads her people to a decisive victory, in which she finds a happy death for her native land. The lyrical sweep of the language, the vivid action, the poetic charm which sheds its light about the heroic maiden, and the exalted patriotic and religious feeling of the drama made an effect upon Schiller's countrymen which he eclipsed only with his *Wilhelm Tell*. *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* is a thorough artistic regeneration of the drama of chivalry, which, in the imitations of Goethe's *Götz*, had lost all literary value.

Schiller's renewed reading of Greek tragic poets and his admiration for Sophocles's tragedy, *King Œdipus*, were the inspiration of an original drama of a frankly antique type, called *Die Braut von Messina* (1803). *Messina oder die feindlichen Brüder*.¹ Schiller sketched it in 1801, and wrote it out between September, 1802, and February, 1803. The quarrel of two brothers about the same woman, which Schiller, in the wake of Leisewitz's *Julius von Tarent* and Klinger's *Die Zwillinge*,² had already treated in *Die Räuber*, appears here in unique form. A mediæval Prince of Messina has had a dream in which he saw a lily grow up between two laurel trees, and then turning into flame, destroy everything about it. An astrologer interprets the dream as meaning that a daughter of the Prince, yet unborn, will cause the death of her two brothers Cesar and Manuel. When the child Beatrice is born, the Prince commands that she be thrown into the sea, but Isabella, the mother, has also had a dream which a monk has interpreted favorably, and she has her daughter secluded and reared in a convent. The father dies, and as the sons grow up they become enemies of each other. At the opening of the drama the time seems favorable for the

¹ *The Bride of Messina, or the Hostile Brothers.* ² *The Twins.*

return of Beatrice, who, according to the monk, "would unite the warring spirits of the sons in an ardent glow of love." Isabella tells the brothers of their sister, and each confesses in turn that he has found a bride. A terrible truth is soon revealed. Beatrice has been carried away from the convent by the agents of Manuel; and when Cesar finds her in the arms of his brother, he kills Manuel. He and his brother have loved the same woman, and that woman is their sister. Cesar stabs himself at his brother's bier. Thus a curse of years before, a prophecy of extirpation called down upon the family through ancestral guilt, is fulfilled. On account of this curse and its realization, Schiller's play is called a "fate tragedy," but with the idea of preordained doom Schiller has combined the guilt of the tragic hero, the passionate Don Cesar; the downfall of the princely house therefore appears as a just condemnation both of ancestral and personal guilt. The last line of the play sounds the key-note of the whole tragedy: "Life, of all our goods, is not the best, but the greatest of all ills—is Guilt!" In order to give his drama a classical tone and to increase the tragic effect, Schiller introduced the antique chorus; it gave the poet opportunity to express many beautiful lyrical reflections, but it proved itself unsuitable for the modern stage. It was not repeated in the many imitations of the play which followed in later years. They were influenced solely by the fate idea, and this, as will be seen, was soon conceived and represented as a fate which ruled blindly, striking without distinction the guilty and the innocent.

Schiller's last completed drama, *Wilhelm Tell*, was written between May, 1803, and February, 1804. The idea of liberty which runs through Schiller's "*Wilhelm Tell*" (1804), works is here popularized, and presented with especial clearness. The theme is the successful struggle which was made by the people of the original three Swiss

cantons to free their native land from the rule of tyranny. Three factors are working on the side of the Swiss toward the common goal: Tell, who can protect himself and his family from the cruelty of the governor Gessler only by the murder of his superior enemy; the main body of the Swiss people, who form a union under the leadership of representatives of each canton with the avowed purpose of driving out the petty deputies of Austria and of preserving chartered liberties; and the young nobleman Rudenz, who is moved by love for his countrywoman Bertha and by the sight of Gessler's tyrannies to renounce his allegiance to Austria, and to attach himself to the cause of his fatherland. This division into three sets of actions makes *Tell* far looser in construction than any other of Schiller's plays, but we overlook this defect in the enjoyment of the play's perennial freshness of feeling and under the spell of many wonderfully dramatic scenes. No other work of Schiller has been taken into the heart of the German people as this one has been, and no other has had such a strong patriotic effect. The warm love of country and the enthusiasm for liberty and national honor which permeate the whole play lay hold on us even to-day. Indeed, in the following years, the time of German national disgrace, it was *Tell* which, as a sacred bequest of the beloved poet, fanned the spark of patriotism in many hearts into a flame of heroic enthusiasm.

Besides Goethe and Schiller and other noted men in Weimar, many other Germans were active in literary work about 1800. Some thought only of popularity with the crowd, others tried with insufficient talents to imitate Goethe and especially Schiller.

Minor Authors of the Classical Period.

Only a few have significance as independent creative authors. Among the latter is the popular Johann Peter Hebel. Born in Basel in 1760, he was a preacher and later evangelical prelate in Karlsruhe, and died in 1826 at

Schwetzingen near Mannheim. Hebel's delightful *Alemannische Gedichte* ¹ (1803) remind us by their dialect of

Hebel
(1760-1826).

Voss's Low German idyls; their gentle simplicity, feeling for nature, and general popular character suggest the poems of Claudius. The witty anecdote, which had long since fallen into vulgar coarseness, Hebel revived and moulded into a classic form in his *Schatzkästlein des rheinischen Hausfreundes* ² (1811). The ideal of a popular writer which the youthful Herder had imagined, was realized in the poetry and personality of Hebel.

The most important novelist of the classical period besides Goethe is the humorist Johann Paul Friedrich

Richter, or, as he is generally called, Jean Paul. Born at Wunsiedel in 1763, he passed a youth

Richter, i. e.,
Jean Paul
(1763-1825).

of great privations, and as a struggling author with a slowly increasing reputation, he lived in different towns in central Germany, among others Weimar. He settled finally in Bayreuth amid pleasant surroundings and in good financial circumstances in 1804, and died there in 1825. Starting out with Sterne, Rousseau, Wieland, and Hippel as his models, Jean Paul achieved an original, independent art whose greatest charms are depth of humor and delicacy of feeling. These gifts are capitally illustrated by his descriptions of idyllic country and village life, especially *Das vergnügte Schulmeisterlein Maria Wuz* ³ and the longer story *Quintus Fixlein*. The humorous semi-ironical character-sketches *Des Rektors Fälbel Reise nach dem Fichtelberg* ⁴ and *Des Feldpredigers Schmelzle Reise nach Flätz*, ⁵ and the broadly comic little novel *Dr. Katzenbergers Badereise*, ⁶ are also delightful expressions of

¹ Alemannic Poems.

² *Treasure Box of the Rhenish Family Friend*.

³ *The Contented Little Schoolmaster Maria Wuz*.

⁴ *Headmaster Fälbel's Journey to the Fichtelberg*.

⁵ *Army Chaplain Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz*.

⁶ *Dr. Katzenberger's Trip to the Baths*.

their author's unique gifts. Unfortunately, Jean Paul's long novels are often hard to enjoy on account of their intricate style, rambling, formless presentation, excessive sentimentality, and innumerable learned references which are now incomprehensible. In their day, however, these novels found hosts of readers who delighted especially in Jean Paul's sentimentalism, just as the preceding generation had wept over *Werther* and *Siegwart*. Among the most important and most widely read are *Die unsichtbare Loge*¹ (1793), *Hesperus* (1795), *Siebenkäs* (1796-97), *Titan* (1800-03), and *Flegeljahre*² (1804-05). The last two are stories of character development, and are strongly marked by the influence of *Wilhelm Meister*. *Titan* is the richest in thought, the most unified, and the most finished in form of all Jean Paul's novels; its story is that of a prince who is reared in ignorance of his origin, and after a varied apprenticeship in life, ascends the throne of his ancestors. The splendid, incomplete *Flegeljahre* is a happy return to the depiction of common life; the contrast of the twin brothers Walt and Vult, the childlike, pure, and helpless idealist and the clever, energetic, satirical realist, is a direct reflection of the two sides of Jean Paul himself, both as a man and as a poet. Except Goethe, Jean Paul affected the novel of the following decades more deeply than any other novelist, especially by his semi-ironical humor and delicate feeling. A strong influence was also exerted by two of his scientific works, by the *Vorschule der Ästhetik*³ (1804) and more particularly by the educational treatise *Levana* (1807).

Schiller's philosophical lyrics were the initial inspiration and guide of the unhappy poet Friedrich Hölderlin, who was born in 1770 at Lauffen near Stuttgart, and died in 1843 in Tübingen after forty years of mental derangement.

¹ *The Invisible Box*, i. e., a box at the theatre.

² *Years of Indiscretion*.

³ *Introduction to Æsthetics*.

Hölderlin's later poems, however, have independent sincerity and maturity. The mood of both his odes and elegies is usually one of longing melancholy; their form is that of the antique free rhythms which Klopstock had introduced into German poetry. Among Hölderlin's most beautiful poems are *An die Deutschen*,¹ *Heidelberg*, *An den Äther*,² and *Hyperions Schicksalslied*.³ The last of these poems is a song of the hero in *Hyperion* (1797-99), a lyrical philosophical novel whose scene is Greece in the time of the uprising of 1770; *Hyperion* contains hardly any plot at all, but it is a masterpiece of German prose. Another gifted elegiac poet of the time was the slightly older Friedrich von Matthisson (1761-1831), a master in sentimental landscape painting. Like Schiller during his young manhood, Johann Gottfried Seume (1763-1810) suffered many hardships from the political oppressions of his time; *Mein Sommer*, 1805⁴ (1806) contains a graphic account of Napoleonic tyrannies. From a purely literary standpoint, however, Seume's best work is his *Spaziergang nach Syrakus*⁵ (1803), which, like *Mein Sommer*, is autobiographical and in prose.

Of the great thinkers and scholars of the classical period, Kant has already been mentioned. One of Schiller's most intimate friends in Jena was the famous statesman, æsthetician, and philologist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835). The latter's brother, Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), was a natural scientist, whose *Ansichten der Natur*⁶ (1808) and *Kosmos* (1845-58) are worthy of note here on account of the vividness of their descriptions. Humboldt acquired this characteristic of his prose from his friend

Leading
Scholars and
Thinkers of
the Classical
Period.

¹ *To the Germans.*

³ *Hyperion's Song of Fate.*

⁵ *A Walk to Syracuse (Sicily).*

² *To the Ether.*

⁴ *My Summer of 1805.*

⁶ *Views of Nature.*

Georg Forster (1754–94), especially from Forster's picturesque *Ansichten vom Niederrhein*¹ (1790), and from his *Reise um die Welt 1772 bis 1775*.² In the field of historical writing Schiller is rivalled by Johannes von Müller (1752–1809), whose *Geschichte der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft*³ (1786–1808), one of Schiller's aids in connection with *Wilhelm Tell*, is admirably terse and animated. Barthold Niebuhr (1776–1832) wrote the first critical history of Rome, *Römische Geschichte*⁴ (1811–32). The new era in the understanding of classical antiquity which Lessing and Winckelmann had ushered in, was advanced further by Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812) in Göttingen and Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) in Halle; Heyne's clear treatment of his subjects and Wolf's new ideas, particularly on Homeric poetry in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum*⁵ (1795), were with Voss's translation of Homer a great stimulus to German classical authors.

¹ *Views on the Lower Rhine.*

² *A Journey around the World between 1772 and 1775.*

³ *A History of the Swiss Confederation.*

⁴ *History of Rome.*

⁵ *Observations Introductory to the Study of Homer.*

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL AND ITS FIRST DISCIPLES. POETS OF THE WAR OF LIBERATION

TOWARD the end of the eighteenth century, in 1797 and 1798, several ambitious young men in Berlin united for purposes of literary criticism and creation, and thus formed the nucleus of a circle which was later known as the Romantic School. The first members of the group were the brothers August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, and the theologian Schleiermacher; soon after the Schlegels and Tieck moved to Jena, in the summer of 1799, they were joined by Novalis and the philosophers Schelling and Steffens. The critical organ of the school was the *Athenäum*, which the Schlegels published from 1798 to 1800. The chief forerunners of the Romanticists were Wieland and Jean Paul. The irony of both these writers made a deep impression upon Tieck and his friends; but Wieland also influenced Romanticism through his tales of chivalry and fairies, and Jean Paul through his indulgence of feeling and through his indifference to artistic form in the construction of his stories. The Romanticists themselves, however, chose as their first models Herder, Goethe, and Schiller. The points of view from which these reformers of German literature started out—return to the popular and native, opposition to mediocrity and false rules, to extreme forms of eighteenth-century enlightenment, and to dogmatism, complete freedom of the life of the spirit and of the imagination—these were also the first principles of the Romanticists. In the course of time Romantic theories went through many and very singular changes.

The Rise of
Romanticism.

Its First
Principles.

The followers of the new movement thought after a while that Goethe and Schiller were hopelessly caught in a current of pseudo-classic idealism and thus diverted from independent poetic creation; they therefore returned to the popular realistic efforts of the "time of genius," to Herder's ideas of artless, popular poetry, to Goethe's early works; of the products of the later classical period *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* was almost their only model. The Storm and Stress came to life again to the extent that they tried to forge a perfect union between life and poetry, and to free any personality endowed with genius from all the limitations of tradition. These theories were based in part on the ideas of the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), who in his *Wissenschaftslehre*¹ (1794) had defended the rights of the individual against the abstract moral laws of Kant; we may add parenthetically that Fichte aided the German struggle against Napoleon in many ways, especially in his inspiring *Reden an die deutsche Nation*,² a series of lectures which he held in Berlin in the winter of 1807-08. Another philosopher Friedrich von Schelling (1775-1854), however, influenced the Romanticists still more deeply than Fichte. According to the theories of Schelling the imagination was no less safe a guide to supreme perception and knowledge than the intellect was; art, which to him was a creative power uniting nature and the spirit, that is, life and thought, he declared to be the acme of human existence.

Inspired by Fichte and Schelling, the Romanticists praised poetic caprice, despised what was artistically finished and clear, revelled in moods of presentiment and foreboding, and preferred the fragmentary and obscure. They obliterated the boundaries between different kinds of poetry and art, even those between poetry, religion, and philosophy. They considered

Its Evils.

¹ *Theory of Knowledge.*

² *Addresses to the German Nation.*

their own age barren in feeling and imagination, and in contemptuous aversion to the present they steeped themselves in the mystical elements of religion and the Middle Ages, in sensuous worship and obscure symbolism; several Romanticists turned in time to the Catholic Church and became devoted Romanists. However, the highest ambition of several adherents of Romanticism was the perfect expression of an all-pervading, all-dominating irony. In the pursuit of this goal they made sport of both life itself and their own imaginative creations; in their abuse of irony they often blemished their lives as well as their art.

The Romanticists remained far behind Goethe and Schiller, but they nevertheless form a happy complement

Its Merits.

to these classic authors, and they furthered German intellectual life. They checked the current of pseudo-classicism into which Goethe and Schiller fell for a time, they defended freer poetic activity, they restored the national to a place of honor and thereby strengthened national feeling, they awakened an understanding for the poetry of the German Middle Ages, they deepened inner religious life and feeling for nature, they increased the means of poetic expression by the introduction of new metrical forms borrowed largely from Romance literatures, and they opened new sources to German poetry by making the literary treasures of foreign countries accessible in masterly translations. Further, through their intellectual versatility they were a stimulus in almost every field of science and art. Romanticists first wrote histories of literature as they are written to-day; Romanticists created the science of philology and the study of Germanic antiquity and folk-lore. No real poet of the first decades of the nineteenth century could withstand the influence of Romanticism, not even Goethe and Schiller, as is proved by the *Westöstliche Divan* of the one and the *Jungfrau von Orleans* of the other.

Of the founders of the Romantic School, the so-called older Romanticists, Ludwig Tieck (born and died in Berlin, 1773–1853) is most famous as the master of romantic moods; he is the singer of “the moonlit, magic night which holds the senses captive.” Tieck possessed the most diverse talents, but he often worked too rapidly and hurriedly. His earliest notable work is a novel in letters, *Geschichte des Herrn William Lovell*¹ (1795–96), a melancholy, unconvincing story of a man’s degeneration. *Der gestiefelte Kater*² (1797), written in mockery of the mediocre sentimental drama of the time, is a good example of Tieck’s witty, satirical comedies on literary matters; *Genoveva* (1799) and *Kaiser Octavianus* (1804) are two of his romantic dramas glorifying the Middle Ages, and *Der blonde Eckbert*³ and *Der Runenberg*⁴ are two of his best tales of the supernatural. Several of his fairy tales, comedies, and dramas are strung together on a thread of conversation held by a group of story-tellers, the work as a whole being entitled *Phantasmus* (1812–16). Tieck is rarely as successful in poetry as he is in the poems *Wohlauf, so ruft der Sonnenschein*,⁵ *Feldeinwärts flog ein Vögelein*,⁶ and *Im Windsgeräusch, in stiller Nacht*;⁷ most of his poems were woven into long works. *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*⁸ (1797) is the joint product of Tieck and his friend W. H. Wackenroder (1773–98). This story and Tieck’s *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*⁹ (1798), a novel on artists’ life in the time of Dürer, were an effective spur to a deeper study of old German masters, and thus influenced the revival of German painting in the works of

¹ *History of Mr. William Lovell.* ² *Puss-in-Boots.*

³ *Fair-haired Eckbert.*

⁴ *The Mountain of Mysteries.*

⁵ “Up and out, the sunshine calls.”

⁶ “Into the fields a little bird flew.”

⁷ “In the murmur of the wind, in the silent night.”

⁸ *Effusions of an Art-loving Friar.*

⁹ *Franz Sternbald’s Travels.*

Veit, Cornelius, Schnorr, of Overbeck and other members of the painters' Romantic School. In later years Tieck outgrew the limitations of Romanticism. He exerted a very beneficial influence from 1825 to 1841 as dramatic critic and adviser to the court theatre in Dresden and as an impartial writer on the drama in general in his *Dramaturgische Blätter*¹ (1825-26); he was a profound student of Shakespeare and greatly advanced the understanding of the English dramatist in Germany. In the years from 1821 on he wrote numerous short stories, as Goethe had done, ultimately becoming the first German master of this form of literature. He chose themes from real life, often of a psychological character, and thus gave the short story a deeper meaning. Among those of an historical nature are *Dichterleben*² and the unfinished *Aufbruch in den Cevennen*,³ among those on social life *Die Gemälde*,⁴ among the psychological *Der Gelehrte*,⁵ among the humoristic *Des Lebens Überfluss*.⁶ Tieck concluded his literary career with the novel *Vittoria Accorombona* (1840), a gloomy but fanciful description of Italian life in the sixteenth century.

The brothers Schlegel, nephews of Elias Schlegel, whom we have already met, are more important as critics than as poets. Standing on the shoulders of Lessing and Herder they saw and pointed out a new path for literary criticism. They were not contented to criticise according to certain standards of art; they deliberately put aside all preconceived theoretical notions and aimed at a complete comprehension and characterization, at a true appreciation, of every literary product, through and for itself. August Wilhelm von Schlegel (born 1767 in Hanover; died 1845 in Bonn) was cold and matter-of-fact as an original poet, but he had a

A. W.
Schlegel
(1767-1845).

¹ *Papers on the Drama.* ² *A Poet's Life, i. e., Shakespeare's.*

³ *The Insurrection in the Cevennes.*

⁴ *Portraits.*

⁵ *The Scholar.*

⁶ *Life's Superabundance.*

fine sense of form, and he had a delicacy of feeling and a sympathetic appreciation for the works of others such as Herder possessed. Through these gifts Schlegel became one of the greatest German translators. His translation of Shakespeare, which began to appear in 1797, made the works of the English poet an integral part of German literature. Schlegel himself translated seventeen of the dramas; the remaining nineteen were done under Tieck's direction by his daughter Dorothea Tieck and Count Wolf Baudissin (1789-1878), the whole now being known as the "Schlegel-Tieck Shakespeare." Schlegel also published translations from various Romance authors, Calderon and others, and under his influence Tieck edited, in 1803, *Minnelieder aus dem schwäbischen Zeitalter*,¹ and Friedrich von der Hagen (1780-1856) published, in 1810, an edition of the *Nibelungenlied*. Schlegel's main critical work is *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*,² lectures held in Vienna in 1808-09. Friedrich von F. Schlegel (1772-1829). Schlegel (born 1772 in Hanover; died 1829 in Dresden) wrote a few inspired poems, such as the patriotic *Es sei mein Herz und Blut geweiht*,³ but most of his creative work is crude and extravagant, like *Lucinde* (1799), a morbid novel whose theme is the freedom of the individual. Through thoughtful, aphoristic essays he furthered the understanding of classical, mediæval, and modern poetry; through his treatise *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*⁴ (1808) he led his generation to a thoughtful study of the character of Oriental poetry and to the establishment of the science of comparative philology.

Friedrich von Hardenberg (born 1772 at Wiederstedt; died at Weissenfels in 1801), as a poet called Novalis, was

¹ *Love Songs from the Swabian Past.*

² *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.*

³ "My heart and blood be consecrated."

⁴ *On the Language and Wisdom of the Hindus.*

a brooder of Faust-like profoundness; he was a deeply religious soul with a fondness for mysticism, which expressed itself most beautifully in his tender poems, *Wenn ich ihn nur habe*,¹ *Wenn alle untreu werden*,² *Das ist der Herr der Erde*,³ *Gesang der Toten*,⁴ and in his mystic *Hymnen an die Nacht*,⁵ written in rhythmical prose. Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), an unfinished novel full of splendid visions and pictures, rich in atmosphere but poor in figures, tries to present the growth of a knightly poet of the Middle Ages, who sets out to find a wonderful "blue flower," a symbol of the longed-for ideal of Romanticism.

The leaders of the Romantic School were the models and, in part, personal friends of several younger poets, who in 1804-08 made their headquarters in Heidelberg. Superior to their masters in poetical talent, these younger Romanticists laid

The Heidelberg Romanticists.

greater emphasis upon the native and popular elements of poetry, and they penetrated farther into the life and spirit of the German Middle Ages. Poetic caprice drove them to extremes at times, so that their writings contain much that is odd besides much that is beautiful. Clemens

Brentano (1778-1842), a son of Goethe's friend Maximiliane La Roche, is a poet of deep and tender feeling in such lyrics as *Ich wollt' ein Sträusslein binden*,⁶ *Es leben die Soldaten*,⁷ and *Es sang vor langen Jahren*,⁸ in the ballads *Die Lore Lay* and *Die Gottesmauer*,⁹ and in the unfinished long poem *Romanzen vom Rosenkranz*.¹⁰ The touching *Geschichte vom braven Casperl und schönen Annerl*¹¹ and several fanciful fairy tales are also

Brentano (1778-1842).

¹ "If but Him I have."

³ "He is lord of earth."

⁵ *Hymns to Night*.

⁷ *Long Live the Soldier*.

⁹ *The Wall of God*.

¹¹ *Story of Honest Casper and Pretty Annie*.

² "If all the world forsake thee."

⁴ *Song of the Dead*.

⁶ "I fain would tie a nosegay."

⁸ "Long years ago there sang."

¹⁰ *Romances of the Rosary*.

notable productions of Brentano's. His greatest work was his contribution to the first comprehensive collection of German folk-songs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*¹ (1806-08), which was published jointly by Brentano and his brother-in-law,

Arnim
(1781-1831). Achim von Arnim (1781-1831). Ever since its resurrection by Herder the folk-song had been giving to lyric poetry many beautiful motives, moods, and stylistic aids; but this new collection was far larger than any of its predecessors and offered an enormous supply of themes for lyric and ballad; it was also conclusive evidence of the beauty and value of German popular poetry, and thus it assisted vitally in strengthening German national spirit. Besides his work on the *Wunderhorn*, Arnim wrote loosely constructed dramas and stories which are often fantastic but interesting; among the latter are *Isabella von Ägypten*² and *Fürst Ganzgott und Sänger Halbgott*.³ His most important work, in which the fantastic is less prominent, is *Die Kronenwächter*⁴ (1817), a largely conceived picture of life in the time of Maximilian I, and the first German historical novel deserving of the name. His wife Bettina (1785-1859) was Brentano's sister, a talented, warm-hearted woman, who left several works with a deep Romantic tinge. Her chief book, *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*⁵ (1835), has little value as a source for a Goethe biography, but it has rare charm as a work of literature.

Another member of the Heidelberg group, Joseph Görres (1776-1848), is particularly noted for the bold, ardent patriotism of numerous political articles
Görres
(1776-1848). which he wrote against the French domination of Germany in the first and second decades of the century.

¹ *The Boy's Magic Horn.*

² *Isabella of Egypt.*

³ *Prince All-God and Minstrel Half-God.*

⁴ *The Guardians of the Crown.*

⁵ *Goethe's Correspondence with a Child.*

Like Tieck, Görres had a keen appreciation of German folk-stories, and in 1807 he collected and edited many of

them under the title *Die deutschen Volksbücher*.¹

Jakob
Grimm
(1785-1863).
Wilhelm
Grimm
(1786-1859).

The brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm (born at Hanau in 1785 and 1786; died in Berlin in 1863 and 1859), two of the sturdiest,

stanchest Germans, were closely associated with the Heidelberg Romanticists. They were the founders and masters of German folk-lore, of the study of Germanic antiquity, and of the science of philology; Jakob's chief scientific works are his *Deutsche Grammatik*² (1819-37), *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*³ (1828), and *Deutsche Mythologie*⁴ (1835); Wilhelm's greatest is *Die deutsche Heldensage*⁵ (1829). In 1854 they published together the beginning of a monumental, standard German dictionary which later scholars have not finished even yet. The place of honor which the Grimms occupy in German literature is, however, based on the *Deutsche Kinder- und Hausmärchen*⁶ (1812-15), which they collected and retold.

In this priceless treasure of childhood they struck the tone of the people with wonderful precision, and established a universal standard in the telling of fairy tales. The lyric

poet Joseph von Eichendorff (born 1788 in Silesia, a member of the lesser nobility, died 1857) was also a friend of Brentano, Arnim, and Görres in Heidelberg. There is a captivating Romantic spirit in his poems and stories; among the latter is the delightfully amusing *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*⁷ (1826), and among the most famous of the former are *In einem kühlen Grunde*,⁸ *Wer hat dich, du schöner Wald*,⁹ *O Taler*

Eichendorff
(1788-1857).

¹ *German Chap-books.*

² *German Grammar.*

³ *Antiquities of German Law.*

⁴ *German Mythology.*

⁵ *The German Heroic Saga.*

⁶ *German Household Tales.*

⁷ *Memoirs from the Life of a Good-for-Nothing.*

⁸ "Tis in a shady hollow."

⁹ "Who has built thee, lovely wood."

*weit, O Höhen,*¹ *Wem Gott will rechte Gunst erweisen,*² and *Es war, als hätte der Himmel.*³ Earnest piety, warm love of his fatherland, deep feeling for nature, and popular form of expression place Eichendorff's lyrics beside the most refreshing products not merely of Romanticism but of all German literature. Scandinavian sagas and mediæval chivalry colored by contemporary events (Fouqué (1777-1843)). formed the chief interest and themes of Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1843). Various songs by Fouqué, such as *Frisch auf zum fröhlichen Jagen*,⁴ and his charming fairy tale *Undine*, are still great favorites; his once popular novels of chivalry, *Der Zauberring*⁵ and others, and his heroic play, *Der Held des Nordens*,⁶ that is, Siegfried, now find few readers.

Germany's disgraceful submission to Napoleon was to no one more humiliating than it was to Heinrich von Kleist, the first important German dramatist after Schiller. A grand-nephew of Ewald von Kleist, he was born October 18, 1777, at Frankfort-on-the-Oder, and lost both of his parents when very young. He entered the army and became an officer, but his desire for further education led him to secure his discharge in 1799, and to begin at the university of his native city the study of mathematics, philosophy, and political science. He was in Berlin for a time, but from 1801 on he led a restless, wandering existence which took him, among other places, to Weimar, to Switzerland, and twice to Paris; at Ossmannstedt he was the guest of Wieland, who first recognized Kleist's genius. Kleist was in Dresden from 1807 to 1809; he edited the unsuccessful

Heinrich
von Kleist
(1777-1811).
His Life.

¹ "Oh valleys wide, oh hill-tops."

² "When God His favor would bestow."

³ "It seemed as if the heaven."

⁴ "Up and away for the merry chase."

⁵ *The Magic Ring.*

⁶ *The Hero of the North.*

periodical *Phöbus* at this time and wrote an astonishing number of original works. From 1810 on he lived in Berlin. Troubles of various kinds now crowded in upon Kleist; a new periodical failed at once, his patron Queen Luise died and he was thus robbed of a pension, which was his only sure income, his contemporaries remained completely indifferent to his works, Germany's subjection to Napoleon distressed him, and he was attacked by an intermittent mental disorder. The utter collapse of all his life's hopes at last drove the wretched poet to a lamentably early death. Together with a friend who, like Kleist, was a victim of melancholia, he shot himself at Wannsee, near Potsdam, November 21, 1811, only thirty-four years old.

Kleist can be reckoned among the Romanticists only in a very limited sense. His works contain much that is strange and startling, the motives for the actions of his characters are often very odd, and his poetry has the turbulent passion and the excessive subjectivity which are characteristic of the Romantic spirit of the time. Besides these qualities, however, Kleist possessed others which no pure Romanticist had. His view of life was always deeply serious, and therefore the irony of Romanticism, which jests about its own creations, was entirely foreign to him. He observed the laws of the drama strictly, and he avoided the confusion of different kinds of literature; vagueness of outline and meaning were impossible to an author of his clearness of vision and purpose. Kleist stands nearer to Shakespeare than any German before him in realistic characterization; his men and women live, and each is a distinct individuality. In the vivid, true portrayal of stormy passion Kleist has no equal in German literature. His passionate struggle after truth, even at the sacrifice of classic beauty, was an inspiring example to Hebbel and Ludwig. The rugged strength and the austere beauty of

**His Character
and Work.**

his language remind us of the young Goethe. Theatrical bombast Kleist did not know; the more exalted the objects of his presentation, the simpler his language. With more balance of character and in a more favorable time, Kleist might have become that which nature, it seems, intended him to be, the German Shakespeare.

Kleist's first drama, *Die Familie Schroffenstein*¹ (1802), a tragedy of chivalry, reflects the Storm and Stress of

Kleist's
Dramas.

Kleist's own youth; it is very reminiscent of Shakespeare, but it also has idyllic beauties of its own. In a moment of disheartenment over the progress of his next play, *Robert Guiscard*, the poet himself unfortunately destroyed all but a few splendid fragments of his work. The brief comedy *Der zerbrochene Krug*² dexterously discloses an action of past time and reveals the consequences of the action in the present in a single scene; a village judge who convicts himself in trying to foist the blame upon others, is a type which bears the stamp of a genius. The wholly un-Greek but thrilling tragedy

"Penthesilea"
(1808).

Penthesilea is full both of demonic savagery and delicate poetry; it is an intense and powerful picture of the Amazonian queen, who, thinking that Achilles has scorned her love, kills him in hate and then herself in frightful remorse. A strong contrast to this is presented by Kleist's glorification of humble, womanly devotion in *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*³ (1808), an idyllic drama of chivalry. Käthchen, who is supposed to be the daughter of an armorer in Heilbronn, is fascinated by a knight, Wetter vom Strahl; with doglike devotion she follows him everywhere, though he raises his hand against her and drives her away with a whip. The armorer accuses him of being a magician, but Käthchen's testimony acquits him of the charge. At last,

¹ *The Schroffenstein Family.*

² *Katie of Heilbronn.*

³ *The Broken Pitcher.*

in a dream, she reveals herself as the daughter of the emperor, and having won the knight's love, she becomes his wife. Kleist's two ripest plays were not produced and printed until 1821, ten years after his death. The glowingly patriotic tragedy *Die Hermannsschlacht*,¹ written in

"Die Hermannsschlacht."

1808, is the most powerful work begotten of the German hatred of Napoleon. Although

Kleist owes some points to Klopstock's drama of the same name, he first imparted dramatic life to the theme, and created in Hermann, the Cheruscan prince, a thoughtful, dignified character. In Kleist's last and most

"Prinz Friedrich von Homburg."

beautiful work, the patriotic drama *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, written in 1810, the

dramatist takes us back to the triumphant days of Fehrbellin (1675), a famous victory in the history of Prussia. Prince Friedrich has won the battle, but in disobedience to the commander's orders. Condemned by a court-martial, he shows a terrible fear of death, but when his friends' petitions for his pardon are denied and the decision as to the justice of his sentence is placed in his own hands, he rises to a complete control of himself and voluntarily submits to law as a moral necessity. Thus he finds himself, and he is then pardoned; victory over self is man's greatest virtue. Various figures, especially those of the Prince, old Colonel Kottwitz, and the Great Elector of Brandenburg, are among the truest and most real in German drama.

The best of Kleist's stories is *Michael Kohlhaas*, a tragedy in the form of a short story which appeared in

Kleist's Stories: "Michael Kohlhaas" (1810).

1810. Kohlhaas, a law-abiding horse-dealer of the sixteenth century, suffers a great wrong, and after making a vain attempt to obtain redress from the law, starts grimly out to secure justice for himself. His acts of violence almost plunge the country into civil

¹ *Hermann's Battle.*

war, but he achieves his purpose, and then calmly receives the death sentence for his crimes, knowing that he has exposed and rebuked injustice. There is very little of the spirit of Romanticism in *Kohlhaas*; it is a concise, straightforward narrative of frank and vivid realism. The wonderful sonnet *An die Königin Luise von Preussen*,¹ the impassioned *Germania an ihre Kinder*,² and the deeply mournful *Das letzte Lied*³ are the best expressions in verse of Kleist's intense patriotism.

Kleist, with all his genius, received far less encouragement from his contemporaries than another Romantic dramatist of far less talent, Zacharias Werner (1768–1823), a man who wasted his best years in reckless dissipation. Werner was much impressed by Schiller's use of the "fate" idea in *Die Braut von Messina*, but he distorted the notion into a representation of blindly ruling chance in his one-act tragedy *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar*,⁴ which was first performed in 1810 and published in 1815. Adolf Müllner (1774–1829) surpassed even Werner in the crudity and sensationalism of his "fate" tragedies *Der neunundzwanzigste Februar*⁵ (1812), *Die Schuld*⁶ (produced in 1813, published in 1816), and others. These plays were for a time very successful on the stage, and they were not without influence on later dramas.

Another of the later Romanticists who won immediate fame was Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann. Born in Königsberg in 1776, he led an erratic, precarious existence until 1814, when he obtained a position connected with the law court in Berlin. Here he became an intimate friend of Fouqué, Chamisso, and other Romantic writers, and in Berlin he died from the effects of dissolute habits in 1822. Hoffmann's gift

E. T. A.
Hoffmann
(1776–1822).

¹ To Queen Luise of Prussia.

² Germania to Her Children.

³ The Last Song.

⁴ The Twenty-fourth of February.

⁵ The Twenty-ninth of February.

⁶ Guilt.

in the presentation of the ghostly and fantastic appears in his first work, *Phantasiestücke*¹ (1814-15), a collection of stories including the pretty fairy tale *Der goldene Topf*² and thoughts and opinions of a mad bandmaster, Kreisler. The grewsome novel *Die Elixiere des Teufels*³ (1815-16) and the humoristic, ironical romance *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr*⁴ (1821-22), which again introduces Kreisler, are Hoffmann's best long works. *Die Serapionsbrüder*⁵ (1819-21), a collection of tales connected like those in Tieck's *Phantasus* by the conversation of a group of story-tellers, is the best illustration of Hoffmann's genius in the short story; among these tales are a pretty romance of old Nuremberg, *Meister Martin der Küfner und seine Gesellen*,⁶ and Hoffmann's most artistic story, *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*.⁷ The popularity and the influence of Hoffmann's stories were not limited to Germany; French Romantists, Victor Hugo and others, were inspired by Hoffmann, and Edgar Allan Poe seems to have been influenced by him in style and method.

During the period of Napoleon's domination in Germany (1806-13), the consciousness of a common fatherland was preserved among the subjects of the many independent German states by numerous products of their country's literature: by Klopstock's patriotic odes, by Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*, by Herder's publications of German popular poetry, and by Schiller's poems, his *Jungfrau von Orleans*, and his *Wilhelm Tell*. Further, the appearance of the First Part of *Faust* (1808) gave Germans the inspiring faith that a nation which could produce a work as great as this could not be doomed to destruction. To the influence of these

Poets of the
War of
Liberation.

¹ *Fantastic Pieces.*

² *The Golden Pot.*

³ *The Devil's Elixir.*

⁴ *Tom-cat Murr's Views of Life.*

⁵ *Brothers of Serapion.*

⁶ *Martin the Master Cooper and His Journeymen.*

⁷ *Mademoiselle de Scudéry.*

national literary possessions were added the moral instruction and discipline of the philosophy of Kant and Fichte. But the way for Austria's revolt in 1809 and the German movement of 1813 was prepared, above all, by the Romantics' revival of the German past and popular poetry, and their admonition to cherish the native and national. Indeed, most of the patriotic poets of the time, who number among them Friedrich Schlegel, Eichendorff, Fouqué, and Kleist, of those mentioned above, sprang directly from the soil of Romanticism. Such was also the origin of Max von Schenkendorf (1783-1817); his ardent patriotic lyrics are among the most beautiful products of German Romanticism, especially, *Erhebt euch von der Erde*,¹ *Freiheit, die ich meine*,² *Muttersprache, Mutterlaut*,³ *In dem wilden Kriegestanze*,⁴ and *Wir haben alle schwer gesündigt*.⁵ More in the style of Schiller is the sonorous eloquence of Theodor Körner, the son of Schiller's friend. He was born in Dresden in 1791 and fell in August, 1813, as a member of Lützow's volunteer corps in the War of Liberation. He is a much-beloved hero in Germany, both on account of his heroic death and on account of his fiery war-songs, which his father collected and published in 1814 under the title *Leier und Schwert*;⁶ for example, *Frisch auf, mein Volk*,⁷ *Du Schwert an meiner Linken*,⁸ *Das Volk steht auf*,⁹ *Was glänzt dort vom Walde*,¹⁰ *Wir treten hier im Gotteshaus*,¹¹ and

¹ "Rise from the ground, ye dreamers."

² "Freedom that I cherish."

³ "Mother language, mother-tongue."

⁴ "In the wild turmoil of battle."

⁵ "All of us have trespassed sorely."

⁶ *Lyre and Sword*.

⁷ "My people, wake!"

⁸ "Thou sword at my left side."

⁹ "The people rise."

¹⁰ "What gleams in yon forest?"

¹¹ "We meet together in God's house."

Ahnungsgrauend todesmutig.¹ Körner's tragedy *Zriny*, an imitation of Schiller, has maintained some favor by its central theme, love of freedom and native land, but the dramas Körner wrote would by themselves have never made a lasting reputation for him. Another popular figure of the time is Ernst Moritz Arndt (born on the island of Rügen in 1769; died, a professor at Bonn, ^{Arndt} (1769-1860). in 1860). An able assistant of Baron Stein, the regenerator of Prussian internal affairs, Arndt advanced the German cause in his prose writings *Der Geist der Zeit*² (1806-18) and *Der Rhein, Deutschlands Strom, nicht Deutschlands Grenze*,³ and even more in his stirring, popular war-songs *Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland*,⁴ *Der Gott, der Eisen wachsen liess*,⁵ *Was blasen die Trompeten*,⁶ *Sind wir vereint zur guten Stunde*,⁷ *Es zog aus Berlin ein tapferer Held*,⁸ and others. Many other poets and writers, artists and scholars, besides these, served their country with sword or pen, often with both. The stanch old father of German gymnastics, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852), may be mentioned here with honor on account of his forcible, striking book *Deutsches Volkstum*⁹ (1810).

¹ "Death foreboding, death defying."

² *The Spirit of the Age*.

³ *The Rhine a River in Germany, not Germany's Boundary*.

⁴ "What is the German's fatherland?"

⁵ "The God who gave His people iron."

⁶ "What means the trumpets' blowing?"

⁷ "When, happy comrades, we're united."

⁸ "There went from Berlin a hero bold."

⁹ *The Life and Spirit of the German People*.

CHAPTER XIX

LATER ROMANTICISTS

THE poets in Heidelberg were not the only followers of Romanticism in south Germany. The spell of the great movement was also cast upon several poets who are known in literature as "the Swabians" because they were natives of a district now incorporated mainly in the kingdom of Württemberg, but which was formerly called Swabia. Ludwig Uhland was the acknowledged leader of the Swabians, but they had no desire to be known as a "school" either through the announcement of adherence to old theories or through the proclamation of new ones. They are Romantic in their fondness for the indigenous and national, for the religious and mediæval, and for idyllic moods; but their works never became what those of the genuine Romanticists often were, extravagant and formless and over-sentimental. A wholesome feeling for nature and a sturdy middle-class spirit are prime characteristics of these Swabian poets. Their most valuable work was in the lyric and ballad.

The leader, Ludwig Uhland, was born April 26, 1787, in Tübingen, where he studied jurisprudence, old German poetry, philology, and theology. In 1819 he was elected to the Württemberg Diet, in which he zealously championed the old rights of the people against the king's attempt to overthrow the constitution. The professorship in German literature at Tübingen to which he was appointed in 1829 he resigned four years later, because the government refused to permit

Uhland
(1787-1862).
His Life.

him, a professor, to be a member of the Diet to which he had been reëlected. In 1848 he was a conspicuous member of the Frankfort Parliament, but after the failure of the political movement which it represented, he devoted himself to his studies in literature and died November 13, 1862, in his native city.

From the very first Uhland was a mature character, calm, reflective, without vehement passions, morally pure, and adamantine in his sense of the honorable.

His Lyric
and Ballad
Poetry.

His poetic creations, almost all of which were written in the years 1805-34, are like the man himself. They seldom thrill, but they command our attention and hold our interest. His poems, which were collected and published first in 1815, are, in the main, rounded, symmetrical products of art, and they are, at the same time, expressions of sincere feeling. Many of them have a beautiful popular tone, and they have, therefore, found their way to the hearts and mouths of the people, especially, *Es zogen drei Bursche wohl über den Rhein*,¹ *Ich hatt' einen Kameraden*,² *Das ist der Tag des Herrn*,³ *Ich bin vom Berg der Hirtenknab'*,⁴ *Droben stehet die Kapelle*,⁵ *Die linden Lüfte sind erwacht*,⁶ *So hab' ich nun die Stadt verlassen*,⁷ and *Wir sind nicht mehr am ersten Glas*.⁸ Two stanzas beginning *Dir möcht' ich diese Lieder weihen*,⁹ and the poem written for the third anniversary of the Battle of Leipsic, *Wenn heut ein Geist herniederstiege*,¹⁰ are powerful expressions of Uhland's love

¹ "Three jolly good fellows crossed over the Rhine."

² "I had a faithful comrade."

³ "This is the Lord's own day."

⁴ "The highland shepherd boy am I."

⁵ "Yonder on the hill 's the chapel."

⁶ "The soothing zephyrs are awake."

⁷ "And now the city is behind me."

⁸ "The first glass now has gone the round."

⁹ "To thee I'd dedicate these songs."

¹⁰ "If now a spirit should descend."

of his country. No less popular among the German people than his lyrics are his capital ballads and stories in verse, many of which revived German sagas, *Klein Roland*,¹ *Roland Schildträger*,² *König Karls Meerfahrt*,³ *Siegfrieds Schwert*,⁴ *Schwäbische Kunde*,⁵ *Graf Eberhard der Rauschebart*,⁶ *Der Schenk von Limburg*,⁷ *Sängerliebe*,⁸ *Bertran de Born*, *Des Sängers Fluch*,⁹ *Das Glück von Edenhall*,¹⁰ *Ver sacrum*,¹¹ and others. Uhland tried the drama, too, but he completed only two plays, *Ernst, Herzog von Schwaben*¹² (1817) and *Ludwig der Bayer*¹³ (1819). The first one, a version of a Middle High German story, is a touching glorification of the loyalty of a friend and is still popular among the Germans. Uhland's scholarly endeavors are closely connected with his poetical work; a master of popular poetry, he edited the first collection of folk-songs with satisfactory scientific notes, *Alte hoch- und niederdeutsche Volkslieder*¹⁴ (1844-45); a singer of the fatherland, he wrote a splendid memorial of a great patriot and poet, *Das Leben Walthers von der Vogelweide*¹⁵ (1822); a ballad poet who took his themes by preference from Germanic and Romance sagas, he made the saga the subject of treatises which are as interesting in their style as they are sound in their scholarship and appreciation.

Gustav Schwab (born and died in Stuttgart, 1792-1850) was a faithful pupil of Uhland and approached his master

¹ *Childe Roland*.

² *Roland Shieldbearer*.

³ *Charlemagne's Journey over the Sea*. ⁴ *Siegfried's Sword*.

⁵ *Swabian Intelligence*.

⁶ *Count Eberhard with the Rustling Beard*.

⁷ *The Cupbearer of Limburg*; the Limburg of this poem is now a ruined castle about forty miles north-east of Stuttgart.

⁸ *Minstrels' Love*.

⁹ *The Minstrel's Curse*.

¹⁰ *The Luck of Edenhall*.

¹¹ *Consecrated Springtime*.

¹² *Ernest, Duke of Swabia*.

¹³ *Louis the Bavarian*.

¹⁴ *Old High and Low German Folk-Songs*.

¹⁵ *The Life of Walther von der Vogelweide*.

in various ballads, especially in *Das Mahl zu Heidelberg*,¹ *Der Reiter und der Bodensee*,² and *Das Gewitter*.³ Schwab

Schwab
(1792-1850).

is also remembered for a thoughtful poetic story *Johannes Kant* and for the familiar student

Kerner
(1786-1862).

song *Bemooster Bursche zieh' ich aus*.⁴ The physician Justinus Kerner (born 1786 in Lud-

wigsburg, died 1862 in Weinsberg), an earnest student of spiritualism, developed his poetical talents with much more independence than Schwab. Kerner's lyrics are marked by roguish humor and deep, often melancholy feeling. Some have the simplicity and popularity of the folk-song: *Wohlauf noch getrunken den funkelnden Wein*,⁵ *Preisend mit viel schönen Reden*,⁶ and *Du herrlich Glas, nun stehst du leer*.⁷ Kerner's stories in verse, *Kaiser Rudolfs Ritt zum Grabe*⁸ and *Der Geiger von Gmünd*,⁹ deserve hardly less praise than his lyrics, and his *Bilderbuch aus der Knabenzeit*¹⁰ is a charming autobiography of his youth.

The ballad, which the Swabians wrote with such mastery, was taken up by many poets in other parts of Ger-

The Influ-
ence of the
Swabians.

many, but much of this later verse was nothing more than rimed prose. The following poems

by minor poets stand out among the countless

ballads which arose under the influence of the Swabians:

*Schwerting der Sachsenherzog*¹¹ by Egon Ebert (1801-82);

*Landgraf Ludwig*¹² by Otto Gruppe (1804-76); *Nächtliche*

¹ *The Banquet at Heidelberg.*

² *The Rider and Lake Constance.*

³ *The Storm.*

⁴ "An oft-scarred son of learning, I must leave you."

⁵ "Away, let us drink but another clear cup."

⁶ "Praising with fond words a-plenty."

⁷ "Thou, noble glass, art empty now."

⁸ *Emperor Rudolf's Ride to the Grave.*

⁹ *The Fiddler of Gmünd.*

¹⁰ *Boyhood's Picture Book.*

¹¹ *Schwerting, the Saxon Duke.*

¹² *Landgrave Louis.*

*Heerschau*¹ by Joseph von Zedlitz (1790–1862); and *Das Erkennen*² and *Heinrich der Vogler*³ by Johann Nepomuk Vogl (1802–66). Of other poets of this period, we have seen, or we shall presently see, that capital ballads were also written by Eichendorff, Chamisso, Müller, Platen, Kopisch, Reinick, Heine, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Simrock, Lenau, Strachwitz, Freiligrath, Mosen, and Mörike.

Romanticism was the starting-point of still other poets, who like the Swabians ultimately won an independent view of life which was broad and wholesome, and which was just to the present as well as to the past. Their poetry is predominantly lyrical.

The Last
Disciples of
Romanticism.

Wilhelm Müller (born and died in Dessau, 1794–1827), a soldier in the German War of Liberation, was an enthusiastic champion of the Greeks in their struggle for independence against Turkey in the twenties; his *Griechenlieder*,⁴ especially *Der Greis auf Hydra*⁵ and *Der kleine Hydriot*,⁶ are the best of the numerous German poems which this revolt inspired. Müller is known now, however, for his talent in the popular lyric. With all the freshness and simple directness of the folk-song he extolled nature in *Die Fenster auf, die Herzen auf*⁷ and other verses, and gay enjoyment of life in poems like *Im Krug zum grünen Kranze*.⁸ *Der Glockenguss zu Breslau*⁹ and the humorous *Est, Est* are the most familiar of his ballads. Franz Schubert helped to spread the fame of Müller's two groups of poems *Die schöne Müllerin*¹⁰ and *Winterreise*¹¹ by setting them to exquisitely fitting music.

W. Müller
(1794–1827).

¹ *The Nightly Muster.*

³ *Henry the Fowler.*

⁵ *The Old Man of Hydra.*

⁷ "Throw open your windows and your hearts."

⁸ "In the inn 'At the Sign of the Garland.'"

⁹ *The Founding of the Bell at Breslau.*

¹⁰ *The Fair Maid of the Mill.*

² *Recognition.*

⁴ *Songs of the Greeks.*

⁶ *The Boy of Hydra.*

¹¹ *A Winter's Journey.*

One gifted German lyricist was by birth a son of France, Adalbert von Chamisso. He was born in 1781 at the Castle Boncourt in the province of Champagne, Chamisso (1781-1838). but eight years later his parents had to flee from their home on account of the French Revolution. They settled in Berlin, where Chamisso died in 1838, after a more or less wandering, restless life. At first influenced by the early Romanticists and then by Uhland, Chamisso became finally an exponent of vigorous realism. Warm, deep feeling is the chief element of the lyrics *Schloss Boncourt*,¹ *Lebenslieder und -bilder*,² *Tränen*,³ *Frauenliebe und -leben*,⁴ and *Die alte Waschfrau*.⁵ His ballads, *Die Löwenbraut*,⁶ *Die Sonne bringt es an den Tag*,⁷ *Der Bettler und sein Hund*,⁸ *Salas y Gomez*, and *Die Kreuzschau*,⁹ show great strength in the development of characters; they often manifest a Romantic fondness for the horrible. *Peter Schlemihl* (1814), a story in prose of the trials of a man who sold his shadow, is both Romantic and popularly realistic.

Friedrich Rückert (born May 16, 1788, in Schweinfurt; died January 31, 1866, at his villa near Coburg) is a lyric poet whose intimate feeling for nature rises to a kind of Christian pantheism; he was without great passions, a didactic poet with a wealth of highly moral ideas, and an artist in form who was often led by his astonishing metrical dexterity into mere juggling with rime. Rückert began his literary career as a patriotic poet under the name of Freimund Reimar; the group of poems called *Geharnischte Sonette*¹⁰ are the best-known of the volume *Deutsche Gedichte*¹¹ (1814). He struck the

¹ *Castle Boncourt.*

² *Tears.*

³ *The Old Washerwoman.*

⁴ *The Sun lets All be Known in Time.*

⁵ *The Beggar and His Dog.*

¹⁰ *Sonnets in Armor.*

² *Songs and Scenes from Life.*

⁴ *Woman's Love and Life.*

⁶ *The Lion's Bride.*

⁹ *The Muster of Life's Crosses.*

¹¹ *German Poems.*

popular tone more clearly in *Auf die Schlacht von Leipzig: Kann denn kein Lied krachen mit Macht*,¹ *O Magdeburg, du starke*,² *Die Gräber zu Ottensen*,³ and *Der alte Barbarossa*.⁴ As a purely lyric poet Rückert's reputation is largely based on his collection of poems entitled *Liebesfrühling*⁵ (1822) and on such lyrics as *Aus der Jugendzeit*,⁶ *Des fremden Kindes heiliger Christ*,⁷ and *Die sterbende Blume*.⁸ He also wrote pleasing fairy tales for children, such as *Vom Bäumlein, das andre Blätter hat gewollt*,⁹ written in six-line stanzas, and thoughtful aphorisms, many of them in Alexandrines, which were collected and published as *Die Weisheit des Brahmanen*¹⁰ (1836-39). His *Östliche Rosen*¹¹ (1822), modelled after Goethe's *West-östliche Divan*, are less successful than his two reproductions of Oriental poems, the idyllic Indian epic *Nal und Damayanti* (1828), an episode from the *Mahabharata* celebrating conjugal fidelity, and the *Verwandlungen des Abu Seid*¹² (1826), from the Arabian, which narrates the tricks of an Oriental Till Eulenspiegel in highly artistic rimed prose. These last two works, which were inspired by Friedrich Schlegel's treatise *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*,¹³ gave the cultured world of Germany a new and vivid conception of Oriental life.

Rückert and August Wilhelm Schlegel are justly famous for their metrical skill, but for sheer beauty of form the poems of Count August von Platen (born 1796

¹ *On the Battle of Leipsic*: "Can then no song ring out with power?"

² "O Magdeburg, thou stronghold."

³ *The Graves at Ottensen*.

⁴ *Old Barbarossa*.

⁵ *Love's Springtime*.

⁶ *From the Days of Youth*.

⁷ *The Christmas Eve of Nobody's Child*.

⁸ *The Dying Flower*.

⁹ *Story of the Little Tree that Wanted Other Leaves*.

¹⁰ *The Wisdom of the Brahmin*.

¹¹ *Eastern Roses*.

¹² *Transformations of Abu Seid*. ☞

¹³ *On the Language and Wisdom of the Hindus*.

in Ansbach; died 1835 at Syracuse in Sicily) hardly have an equal in German literature. Platen started out as an apt student of Goethe's *Westöstliche Divan*, but in 1825 he published a thoroughly independent, unsurpassed group of sonnets, *Venedig*.¹ Platen's mastery of verse-form also appears in his imitations of the antique ode as introduced by Klopstock, and in his well-known ballads *Das Grab im Busento*² and *Der Pilgrim vor St. Just*.³ Of his satirical comedies, which were inspired by Aristophanes and Tieck, *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel*⁴ (1826) ridicules deliciously the vagaries of the "fate" tragedies, while *Der romantische Ödipus*⁵ (1829) is a mockery of Immermann and Romanticism. Platen's poetry was a model in matters of form for the lyric poems of August Kopisch (1799-1853); in other works, in amusing sagas and witty anecdotes, *Historie von Noah*⁶ and *Die Heinzelmannchen*,⁷ Kopisch was original. Just as fresh as the poems of Kopisch, but pervaded with still more delicate feeling, are the poems of Robert Reinick (1805-52), *Liederbuch eines Malers*⁸ and *Lieder und Fabeln für die Jugend*.⁹

Of all the poets, however, who drank at the spring of Romanticism, unquestionably the greatest was Heinrich Heine, the most gifted lyric poet in German literature since Goethe. Heine was born of Jewish parentage in Düsseldorf, December 13, 1797. He made a vain attempt at a business career under the protection of a wealthy uncle, Salomon Heine in Hamburg, but the chief result of his early experience was an unrequited passion for his uncle's daughter Amalie. In 1819 he turned to the study of law and attended in succes-

Heine
(1797-1856).
His Life.

¹ Venice.

² The Grave in the Busento.

³ The Pilgrim at Yuste, i. e., Charles V.

⁴ The Fatal Fork.

⁵ The Romantic Œdipus.

⁶ Story of Noah.

⁷ The Brownies.

⁸ A Painter's Song-book.

⁹ Songs and Fables for the Young.

sion the universities at Bonn, Göttingen, and Berlin; in Bonn he studied under August Wilhelm Schlegel; in the Prussian capital he enjoyed the stimulus furnished by literary coteries and published his first volume of poems (1822). After being baptized in the Christian faith Heine took the degree of Doctor of Law at Göttingen in 1825. The succeeding years, until 1831, Heine spent largely in travel at his uncle's expense; he was in England for a few months, on the coast of the North Sea, in northern Italy, and in Munich, where he had a position as editor of a journal. The publication of the *Harzreise*¹ (1826), an account of a walking trip in the Harz Mountains, had brought him a considerable measure of fame, and this had been increased by the *Buch der Lieder*² (1827), which was immediately recognized as the most important contribution to German poetry made by the new generation. However, tactless personal attacks upon various authors, and especially upon governments in different parts of Germany, began to make his native country an uncomfortable place of residence for Heine. In 1831, stirred by the promise of liberal political life which the July Revolution in France had awakened, justly disgusted with the wretched condition of political affairs in his own country, and fearful for his own personal safety, he went to Paris and made it his home from that time forth. His chief occupation now was as a correspondent for German newspapers, but he also wrote for French journals, treating, in each case, of affairs in the other country and thus serving as an intermediary between his old and new homes. His long poems, *Deutschland* and *Atta Troll*, and many brief lyrics were also written during this period of his life. In 1848 Heine was attacked by an incurable affection of the spinal column, and for eight years he was confined to his "mat-

¹ *A Journey in the Harz.*

² *Book of Songs.*

tress grave," suffering terrible agonies like a hero. He died February 17, 1856.

The many contradictions in Heine's life and character have often been noted by critics and commentators. At heart he was wholly and sincerely neither Jew nor Christian, neither German nor French, and yet at times he was each of these. He was sentimental and pessimistic, naïve and sceptical; he was an aristocrat of the old school and a revolutionist. He was as Romantic in origin as any man ever was, and yet he dealt some of the hardest blows at Romanticism which the movement ever suffered. Bitterly opposed to the reactionary political tendencies of his time, he proudly asserted that he had been a soldier in the war for the liberation of humanity, in the struggle for constitutional government, and yet he scorned association with liberals on account of their quarrelling and unwashed linen. Beyond destructive polemics Heine never advanced. The time was unfavorable, but more than this, he lacked the balance of character and the larger vision which construct for future generations.

Heine's prose particularly, in a lesser but still striking degree his poetry, too, contains the testimony of his contradictory life and nature. If we seek the germs of Heine's prose style, we may go back to the wit and irony of Wieland and Jean Paul, but there are few points of real resemblance between Heine's prose and that of any of his predecessors in German literature. Neither Wieland nor Jean Paul approaches Heine in brilliance of wit or in subtleness of irony. No one can be compared with Heine in the invariable clearness and lightness of his sentences or in his dazzling use of metaphor and simile; in these respects his prose is nearer the standard of the French, which he admired most cordially, than that of any of his contem-

Heine's
Character
and Career.

Heine as a
Prose-Writer
and Poet.

poraries. On the other hand, Heine's style is often lacking in balance. Within the same paragraph the purest poetic feeling may clash with the bitterest satire and cynicism. Heine's prose style has been a model to many German writers; to its clarity of expression and to its smoothness of diction is due in part the enormous advance which German prose style has made since Heine's time. However, Heine's true and lasting fame rests upon his lyric poetry. He represents the culmination of the predominant spirit of the earliest decades of his century. Like the Romanticists, he was a poet of the momentary mood, whether idyllic or grewsome; he was deeply affected in his poetry by the songs of the people, and he delighted in mingling brilliant Oriental color with the quiet tones of native German poetry. Further, he was a master of Romantic irony. No other German poet can conjure up a delicate, exquisite mood with fewer, simpler words; no other can shatter it so suddenly, so devilishly. He supplemented the Romantic love of the forest and inland nature by his love and understanding for the sea. He leads all other German poets in his pictures of rolling waves and long, sandy downs. The rhythm and love element of Heine's poetry have inspired scores of musicians and hundreds of musical compositions. The joys of love have never been sung with more sweetness and tenderness; the bitterness of unrequited love has never been sung with as much intensity and art. The time has even yet not come when Heine's countrymen at large overlook his faults as a man and accept his poetry for what it is. In this respect no other country in Europe is so obsessed by prejudice and so blind. No other German product of the nineteenth century has been so widely read abroad as Heine's *Buch der Lieder*.

A small volume of poems, *Gedichte*¹ (1822), and two grewsome tragedies, *Almansor* and *William Ratcliff*

¹ *Poems*, later entitled *Junge Leiden*, i. e., *Youthful Sorrows*.

(1823), the latter book containing between the two plays a group of poems called *Lyrisches Intermezzo*,¹ were Heine's first publications. They received little attention at the time, although even the first one contained such wonderful lyrics and ballads as *Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden*,² *Der arme Peter*,³ *Die Grenadiere*,⁴ *Belsatzar*,⁵ and the two exquisite sonnets to the poet's mother. The *Intermezzo* presents many of Heine's most familiar lyrics of unrequited love, *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*,⁶ *Aus meinen Tränen spriessen*,⁷ *Lehn' deine Wang' an meine Wang'*,⁸ *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*,⁹ *Ich grolle nicht, und wenn das Herz auch bricht*,¹⁰ *Und wüssten's die Blumen, die kleinen*,¹¹ *Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam*,¹² *Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen*,¹³ and *Sie haben mich gequälet*.¹⁴ In 1827, Heine established his fame as a lyric poet forever by the publication of the *Buch der Lieder*. Besides the poems previously published it contained three new groups, *Die Heimkehr*,¹⁵ celebrating chiefly his love for Amalie Heine's younger sister Therese, another group inserted originally in the *Harzreise*, and a startling series of Homeric pictures of the North Sea written in free rhythms, and entitled *Nordseebilder*.¹⁶ Among the new poems are the love lyrics *In mein gar zu dunkles Leben*,¹⁷ *Du schönes Fischermäd-*

¹ *Lyrical Interlude.*² "Lovely cradle of my sorrows."³ *Poor Peter.*⁴ *The Grenadiers.*⁵ *Belshazzar.*⁶ "In May, the fairest month of all."⁷ "Out of my tears arise."⁸ "Lean thy cheek, love, against my own."⁹ "On pinions of song, love."¹⁰ "I murmur not, e'en though my heart should break."¹¹ "If flowers, the little ones, knew it."¹² "A pine-tree standeth lonely."¹³ "A youth adores a maiden."¹⁴ "They've teased me and tormented."¹⁵ *The Return Home.*¹⁶ *Pictures of the North Sea.*¹⁷ "In my life so dark and lonely."

chen,¹ *Herz, mein Herz, sei nicht beklommen*,² *Du bist wie eine Blume*,³ *Mädchen mit dem roten Mündchen*,⁴ and *Du hast Diamanten und Perlen*,⁵ the ballads *Die Lore-Ley: Ich weiss nicht, was soll es bedeuten*⁶ and *Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar*,⁷ the lyrics *Mein Kind, wir waren Kinder*⁸ and *Die Ilse*,⁹ and the sea pictures *Abenddämmerung: Am blassen Meeresstrande*,¹⁰ *Seegespenst: Ich aber lag am Rande des Schiffes*,¹¹ and *Meergruss: Thalatta! Thalatta! sei mir gegrüsst, du ewiges Meer!*¹² During his later years Heine wrote both his long poems *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen*¹³ (1844) and *Atta Troll, ein Sommernachtstraum*¹⁴ (1847); the former is a satire on his native country, the latter is an attack on Romanticism and the political poetry of the forties. Heine's later poems are contained in three collections, *Neue Gedichte*¹⁵ (1844), many of these poems appearing originally either in Heine's prose works or in various journals, *Romanzero* (1851), and *Letzte Gedichte*¹⁶ (1853 and 1855); the *Romanzero*, so called on account of the brief "Romantic" stories in verse which it contains, presents also the fantastic, poignant *Lamentationen*¹⁷ of the

¹ "Thou pretty fishermaid."

² "Heart, my heart, be not so troubled."

³ "Thou seemest like a flower."

⁴ "Maiden with the mouth so ruddy."

⁵ "Of diamonds and pearls thou hast plenty."

⁶ *The Lore-Ley*: "I know not what it forebodeth."

⁷ *The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar*, i. e., Kevelaer, about sixty miles north-west of Cologne.

⁸ "My child, we were but children."

⁹ *The Ilse*, a small stream in the Harz Mountains.

¹⁰ *Evening Twilight*: "Upon the pallid seashore."

¹¹ *A Phantom of the Sea*: "Gazing I leaned o'er the side of the vessel."

¹² *A Greeting to Ocean*: "Thalatta! Thalatta! Hail to thee, sea, main without end."

¹³ *Germany, a Winter's Tale*.

¹⁴ *Atta Troll, a Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

¹⁵ *New Poems*.

¹⁶ *Last Poems*.

¹⁷ *Lamentations*.

world-worn poet. Among Heine's famous later lyrics are *Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt*,¹ *Denk' ich an Deutschland in der Nacht*,² the exquisite epitome of his affection for Germany *Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland*,³ and the tender lines to his wife *Ich war, o Lamm, als Hirt bestellt*.⁴

Heine's very first prose work, the four volumes of *Reisebilder* ⁵ (1826-31), in which he told experiences and observations of his life and travel in Germany,

His Prose.

Italy, and England, displays all the beauties and faults of his prose in general, the flashes of wit and the light of pure poetry, the vividness and smoothness of expression, the confusion of discordant ideas, the cruel gibes at honored men and institutions, the mockery of religion. Heine's articles on French political affairs and French life, written for publication in German newspapers, were afterward collected under three titles, *Französische Zustände* ⁶ (1833), *Der Salon* ⁷ (1835-40), and *Lutetia* ⁸ (1854). His caustic attacks on Germany, scattered through nearly all his prose work, associated him in spirit with a group of reformers, the so-called "Young Germans," whom we shall meet in the next chapter. Heine wrote *Die Romantische Schule* ⁹ (1836) with the desire to instruct the French concerning German Romanticism; his book contains unsavory personal ridicule and errors of fact and judgment, but it presents many acute observations on Romanticism and brilliant characterizations of various Romantic poets.

¹ "Gently passes through my soul."

² "If in the night I think of home."

³ "In days gone by I had a fatherland."

⁴ "I was thy God-sent shepherd, lamb."

⁵ *Pictures of Travel*.

⁶ *French Affairs*.

⁷ *The Salon*.

⁸ *Lutetia*, an old name for the city of Paris.

⁹ *The Romantic School*.

Whereas Heine in his life and in his works reflects directly the Romantic and iconoclastic spirit of his time,

Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797-1848) resisted with striking independence all contemporary currents which did not accord with her own feeling and thought. Nevertheless, as a pious Catholic, she is closely related with Romanticism. Her poems lack a smooth, melodious flow, but they have genuine feeling and a strength in presentation which rank this shy noblewoman first among the German poets of her sex. Her country's literature was permanently enriched by the intimate pictures of nature in the poems *Durchwachte Nacht*,¹ *Am Turm*,² and others, by the sympathetic delineation of character in the poems *Gethsemane*, *Die junge Mutter*,³ *Der sterbende General*,⁴ and *Die beschränkte Frau*,⁵ by ballads like *Die Vergeltung*,⁶ and by the short story *Die Judenbuche*.⁷

¹ *A Vigil.*

³ *The Young Mother.*

⁵ *A Simple Woman.*

⁷ *The Jew's Beech-tree.*

² *By the Tower.*

⁴ *The Dying General.*

⁶ *The Atonement.*

CHAPTER XX

LITERATURE IN THE YEARS OF REACTION

WHEN the victorious German hosts returned to their homes from the wars against Napoleon in 1813 and 1815, they came with the confident expectation of a new political life. A constitutional share in their government had been promised to them as a reward for their response to the fatherland's cry of distress, but they soon found that their dream of political liberty was an illusion. Under the guidance of Metternich, her Prime Minister, Austria adopted at once the principles of "reaction," the denial to her people of any part in political affairs, a rigid censorship of the press, a wholesale suppression of public opinion,—in short, a reaction in favor of, or a return to, extreme absolute monarchism. As in times past, the example which Austria now set became the standard for nearly all the states of Germany. Beginning about 1815, this spirit of reaction prevailed until 1848, when the popular discontent, which had become more and more acute in the thirties and forties, at last broke out into open rebellion. Even now the people did not gain all they hoped for, but in Austria Metternich was dismissed, in Prussia the first steps toward constitutional government were taken, and everywhere the most objectionable features of reaction were stamped out forever. Much of the literature of the years preceding 1848 reflects the spirit of antagonism to reaction; much of it was written with the purpose of a propaganda, as we have already seen in the case of Heine. Many authors were directly impeded in their poetic careers by the obstacles

The
Meaning of
"Reaction."

The Effect of
"Reaction"
on Literature.

which the agents of reaction put in their paths. No one could remain wholly unaffected by the distressing state of public life.

The stifling effects of reaction are nowhere more apparent than in the drama of the time, nor in any life more than in that of Franz Grillparzer, the greatest dramatist of these decades and the first notable Austrian in modern German literature.

Grillparzer
(1791-1872).
His Life and
Work.

Born in Vienna, January 15, 1791, he lived the narrow, oppressed life of a petty government official throughout his best years. He was by nature a very timid man, and when he was further hindered in his poetic advancement by the censor's foolish intervention, he drew back into the life of a recluse and died June 21, 1872; only in his last years did he receive the honor which he deserved. Grillparzer studied and mastered all his time offered which could develop and ripen his genius. He learned from Goethe's *Iphigenie* and Schiller's *Wallenstein*, from the great poets of antiquity, and from Shakespeare; he served his apprenticeship to Romanticism, and he studied the Spanish drama which the Romanticists had introduced, especially the works of Lope de Vega; finally, he was stimulated by the jovial humor and romantic fancifulness of the Viennese popular drama. But deep feeling for poetic truth and sincerity preserved him from imitation. The poetic content of his dramas, their fine psychological analysis of human character and action, the dignity and the deep but restrained passion of his men and women, are his own.

Grillparzer's first work of note, *Die Ahnfrau*¹ (1817), is a "fate" tragedy which with many of the faults common to its kind bears witness to the instinctive dramatic genius of its author. In one long stride, however, he advanced from its midnight gloom to the noon-day clarity of *Sappho* (1819). The latter play

His First
Plays.

¹ *The Ancestress.*

presents the unhappy love and voluntary death of the Greek poetess Sappho in general accord with the usual accounts of her life. Grillparzer added, however, much that was new, and, above all, he told the story with deep sympathy; the discord between life and art which wrecked Sappho's happiness, as it had that of Goethe's Tasso, Grillparzer had himself experienced. As Euripides's *Iphigenia among the Taurians* inspired Goethe to his *Iphigenie*, so the same Greek dramatist's *Medea* now spurred Grillparzer to the dramatic treatment of the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece. The trilogy *Das goldene Vliess*¹ (1822), consisting of *Der Gastfreund*,² *Die Argonauten*,³ and *Medea*, forges the tragic content of Jason's and Medea's life into a chain of guilt and just but awful retribution. In *Medea*, especially, Grillparzer rises to heights of dramatic power which he does not approach in his earlier plays.

The history of his native land was the source for Grillparzer's next work, the tragedy *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*⁴ (1825), in which he illustrates the fickleness of earthly fortune. The dignity of the unpretending Habsburg Rudolf affords a striking contrast to the mock glory of the haughty, rebellious King of Bohemia, Ottocar. But the factional political life of Austria in the twenties was not the atmosphere in which patriotic drama could thrive. The theme of Grillparzer's next tragedy, *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn*⁵ (1830), is indeed taken from Hungarian history, that is, Austrian in a large sense, but this reverent glorification of faithfulness to duty, intended by its author as a kind of dramatic mirror for princes, met harsh misinterpretations from the public; in bitter chagrin Grillparzer gave up the series of Austrian

¹ *The Golden Fleece.*

² *The Guest.*

³ *The Argonauts.*

⁴ *King Ottocar's Weal and Woe.*

⁵ *A Faithful Servant of His Master.*

historical plays he had planned, and returned to the realm of the antique.

The ancient oft-told story of the love and death of Hero and Leander now inspired Grillparzer to his most poetic work, a deeply impressive tragedy which he called *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*¹ (1831), thus indicating by the title his romantic conception of the antique theme. In the fanciful play *Der Traum, ein Leben*² (1834), a grewsome dream shows the hero how the desire for worldly glory can lead a man to sacrifice his conscience and his inner peace of soul, and thus wreck his life. These two plays mark the climax of Grillparzer's genius; few plays in German literature have the poetry and the pathos of *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*, and few have the dramatic intensity and power of *Der Traum, ein Leben*. In 1838 Grillparzer astonished his public by appearing as an author of comedy, in the play *Weh dem, der lügt*,³ written the year before. In spite of the clever ideas, the poetry, and the pure morality of the comedy, it was not a success on the stage; it was more or less unintelligible to the Viennese on account of the remote time of the action, the sixth century, and Austrian aristocrats felt insulted by the satirical figure of a nobleman in the play. Deeply wounded by its abrupt rejection, Grillparzer published no other complete plays, only the beautiful fragment *Esther*. Later, several tragedies were found among his literary remains which are thoroughly worthy of their author, *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*,⁴ *Die Jüdin von Toledo*,⁵ and *Libussa*, Grillparzer's most thoughtful work. Besides his dramas Grillparzer also wrote a short story, *Der arme Spielmann*,⁶ a masterpiece in psychology; a con-

His Last
Plays.

¹ *Waves of the Sea and of Love.*

² *A Dream is Life.*

³ *Woe to Him Who Lies.*

⁴ *Fraternal Strife in the House of Habsburg.*

⁵ *The Jewess of Toledo.*

⁶ *The Poor Musician.*

siderable number of aphorisms and epigrams; and many poems, *Mein Vaterland*,¹ *Abschied von Wien*,² *Feldmarschall Radetzky*,³ and others.

A compatriot of Grillparzer's, Ferdinand Raimund (1790-1836), achieved immediate fame; he is the classic author of the Viennese popular drama. *Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind*⁴ (1828) and *Der Verschwender*⁵ (1833) are gems of their

Minor
Dramatists.
Raimund
(1790-1836).

kind, full of naïve romanticism and hearty humor. Sober, pedantic Ernst Raupach (1784-1852) wrote countless plays which were great favorites in their day, but they have long since been forgotten. The dramas of Christian

Grabbe (1801-36) were never produced with any success. Grabbe blighted his talents by dissipation and never acquired any balance in his art. The tragedies *Don Juan und Faust* (1829), *Friedrich Barbarossa* (1829), and *Napoleon* (1831) are proofs of Grabbe's bold imagination and keen powers of observation and characterization; but like the dramas of the Storm and Stress, they contain much of the unbridled passion and confusion of form which made effective stage presentation impossible. Grabbe's *Scherz, Satire, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung*⁶ (1822), a literary comedy in the style of Tieck, has much spontaneous wit.

Grabbe
(1801-36).

In spite of sundry efforts which classic and Romantic authors had made to establish a connection between literature and life, the presentation of contemporary conditions was a field of literary activity whose possibilities were still hardly imagined.

From the time of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* the novel had treated æsthetic questions almost exclusively. *Die*

The Rise of
the His-
torical Novel.

¹ *My Native Land.*

² *A Farewell to Vienna.*

³ *Field-Marshal Radetzky.*

⁴ *The King of the Alps and the Misanthrope.*

⁵ *The Spendthrift.*

⁶ *Jest, Satire, Irony, and Deeper Meaning.*

Wahlverwandschaften, which attempted a solution of a moral, social problem, was not considered a model, and Jean Paul's humoristic sentimental novels could serve as exemplary reflections of real life only in so far as they presented simple idyllic scenes. The depiction of the immediate present was delayed still longer by the example of Walter Scott's historical novels, *Waverley* (1814) and its successors, the influence of which can be traced in German literature as early as Arnim's *Kronenwächter* (1817), which was mentioned above. Wilhelm Hauff (born 1802 in Stuttgart; died 1827) was a much more devoted fol-

Hauff
(1802-27).

lower of Scott than Arnim, especially in his pleasing story of old Swabian knighthood *Lichtenstein* (1826). In the brief career which was granted to Hauff, he also wrote the lyrics *Morgenrot, Morgenrot*¹ and *Steh' ich in finst'rer Mitternacht*,² a number of fairy tales such as *Das steinerne Herz*,³ and short stories; among the latter is the fantastic *Phantasien im Bremer Ratskeller*⁴ (1827), which shows the influence of Hoff-

Alexis
(1798-1871).

mann. The most gifted German disciple of Scott was Willibald Alexis, the pen-name of Wilhelm Häring (born 1798 in Breslau; died 1871). The first important novel by Alexis, *Cabanis* (1832), is a realistic portrayal of the age of Frederick the Great. His later works, *Der Roland von Berlin*⁵ (1840), *Die Hosen des Herrn von Bredow*⁶ (1846-48), *Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*⁷ (1852), *Isegrimm* (1854), and others, also present truthful scenes and figures from Prussian history. Alexis in these novels, Tieck in his *Vittoria Accorombona*, and

¹ "Break of day, break of day."

² "When I stand at gloomy midnight."

³ *The Stone Heart*.

⁴ *Fantasies in the Wine Cellar of the Bremen Town-hall*.

⁵ *Roland of Berlin*.

⁶ *The Breeches of Sir Bredow*.

⁷ *Keep Cool*.

Hermann Kurz (1813-73) in his romances *Schillers Heimatsjahre*¹ (1843) and *Der Sonnenwirt*² (1855), showed very clearly that the purpose of the historical novel does not consist in the invention of romantic complications but in the presentation of life. Most story-tellers of this generation, however, lacked historical insight and thorough knowledge; consequently many of their pictures are distorted and untrue, and their works as a whole are no longer classed as a part of real literature.

Karl Immermann (born 1796 at Madgeburg, a jurist and manager of a theatre, died 1840 in Düsseldorf) followed Romantic currents at first, especially in his poetic drama *Merlin* (1832), but he soon turned to the life of his time and assisted in reëstablishing fiction dealing with contemporary conditions. The novel *Die Epigonen*³ (1836) is built on the lines of *Wilhelm Meister*; it is a comprehensive painting of German social and intellectual life from the time of the War of Liberation to the thirties. In his chief work *Münchhausen* (1838-39), the first great German novel since the appearance of Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften*, Immermann presents a very forcible contrast: on the one hand, the sins and absurdities of so-called higher circles, and on the other—in an inserted village romance called *Der Oberhof*—the healthful atmosphere of a small community. The warm sympathy and the truth with which Immermann here describes rural life, as well as his portraits of a village judge and the fair Lisbeth, make *Der Oberhof* one of the treasures of German literature. About the same time as the appearance of *Münchhausen*, Jeremias Gotthelf (the pseudonym of a Swiss pastor, Albert Bitzius, 1797-1854)

Novels on
Contempo-
rary Life.

Immermann
(1796-1840).

Stories of
Peasant
Life.

¹ *Schiller's Life in His Native Province.*

² *Mine Host of "The Sun."*

³ *The Epigoni*, i. e., "weak descendants of a strong creative race."

published his vivid stories of peasant life, *Leiden und Freuden eines Schulmeisters*¹ (1838), *Uli der Knecht*²

Gotthelf (1841), its sequel, *Uli der Pächter*³ (1846), and others. As compared with these thoroughly wholesome popular stories by Gotthelf, the *Schwarz-*

wälder *Dorfgeschichten*⁴ (1843-54) by Berthold Auerbach (born 1812 in Nordstetten, died 1882) appear highly

Auerbach colored and untrue; only a few of Auerbach's stories, such as *Diethelm von Buchenberg* and *Tolpatsch*,⁵ have any lasting value. In the forties, how-

ever, village tales were comparatively new, and Auerbach was one of the most popular authors of his day. His novels *Auf der Höhe*⁶ (1865) and *Das Landhaus am Rhein*⁷ (1869) were also once read by all lovers of literature.

Charles Sealsfield, in real life Karl Postl (1793-1864), wrote much truer and more interesting stories than Auerbach, for example, *Das Kajütenbuch*⁸ (1841). A wanderer in America for a long time, he practised his remarkable descriptive powers exclusively on foreign conditions, often in a very careless style. James Fenimore Cooper was to a large extent the model of Sealsfield as well as of Friedrich Gerstäcker (1816-72), who wrote many exciting tales of American life.

After the Revolution of July, 1830, had accomplished the overthrow of reaction and the triumph of popular sovereignty in France, the discontent in Germany grew more and more bitter; the arbitrary measures of different governments, the suppression of public opinion, and the tendency toward the complete disintegration of the fatherland appeared more intolerable than ever. This fermentation

"Young Germany." Its Character and First Representatives.

¹ *The Sorrows and Joys of a Schoolmaster.*

² *Uli the Hired Man.*

³ *Uli the Leaseholder.*

⁴ *Village Tales of the Black Forest.*

⁵ A name, "Blockhead."

⁶ *On the Heights.*

⁷ *The Villa on the Rhine.*

⁸ *Cabin Book.*

soon expressed itself in literature. As early as the beginning of the thirties, several gifted young authors, who were very soon classed together under the name of "Young Germany," assumed the rôle of leaders of the people. The main purpose of the "Young Germans" was to voice the popular protest against the reactionary spirit of the time, and in this way to force the establishment of a liberal form of government in all the German states. They also attacked Romanticism, religion, and the morals and customs of the middle classes, but political reform was their main object, and political abuses were the main subjects of their writings. Heine claimed to have called forth this agitation, but Ludwig Börne (born at Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1786; died, 1837, in Paris) can with equal right be called the first of the Young Germans. His *Briefe aus Paris*¹ (written 1830-33), in which he attacked toadyism at court, censorship and other forms of tyranny, were among the first and most eloquent expressions of Young German spirit. Börne was a master of prose style, the influence of which on his generation was deep and lasting. The revolutionary, socialistic views of the novelist George Sand and various other French authors whom Heine and Börne knew personally in Paris, recur again and again in the works of Young Germany.

Heine and
Börne
(1786-1837).

Besides Heine and Börne, leading representatives of the new movement were Karl Gutzkow and Heinrich Laube, both of whom were at first committed to purely negative, destructive polemics in the form of newspaper articles. In 1835 Gutzkow (born 1811 in Berlin, died 1878) published a novel, *Wally die Zweiflerin*,² whose revolutionary, anti-religious tendencies aroused a great sensation and caused the author a brief imprisonment. Gutzkow's most important novel is

Other
"Young
Germans."

¹ *Letters from Paris.*

² *Wally the Sceptic.*

Die Ritter vom Geiste ¹ (1850–52), in which he presents his political and social ideas with that minute attention to the details of the picture which we shall find characteristic of novelists at the end of the century. *Der Zauberer von Rom* ² (1858–61) and Gutzkow's other later novels show a decline in his powers. His dramas include a comedy, *Zopf und Schwert* ³ (1844), and a tragedy, *Uriel Acosta* (1847), a powerful plea for freedom of thought and Gutzkow's best dramatic work; mention may also be made here of *Der Königshauptmann* ⁴ (1849), a play written for the centenary of Goethe's birth and dealing with more or less fictitious events in Goethe's

childhood. The chief interest of Heinrich Laube (1806–84). Laube (born 1806 in Silesia, died 1884) was focussed on the stage. Heine's *Reisebilder* inspired him to a similar work of large conception which he called *Reisenovellen* ⁵ (1834–37), and he also wrote a realistic novel on the time of the Thirty Years' War, *Der deutsche Krieg* ⁶ (1865–66), but his best works are his books on theatrical matters, *Das Burgtheater* ⁷ (1868) and others, and his two plays, *Die Karlsschüler* ⁸ (1847), a story of Schiller's life at the Karlsschule, and *Graf Essex* ⁹ (1853), Laube's most finished drama.

Young Germany was assisted in its attempts at political regeneration by several lyric poets who have been favorites of the German people on account of their courageous independence and strong national spirit. Heinrich Hoffmann, or Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874), as he is known from his birthplace, was the author of many warm patriotic lyrics, *Deutschland, Deutschland über*

Political
Poets.

Hoffmann
von
Fallersleben
(1798–1874).

¹ *Knights of the Spirit.*

³ *Queue and Sword.*

⁵ *Stories of Travel.*

⁷ *The Burg Theatre, in Vienna.* ⁸ *Pupils of the Karlsschule.*

⁹ *Lord Essex.*

² *The Sorcerer of Rome.*

⁴ *The King's Lieutenant, cf. p. 178.*

⁶ *The German War.*

*alles*¹ (1841), *Wie könnt' ich dein vergessen?*² *Treue Liebe bis zum Grabe*,³ and others, and of many pretty children's songs. The publication of his revolutionary *Unpolitische Lieder*⁴ (1840-41) led to his dismissal from a professorship at the university of Breslau and to a wandering existence which lasted many years. The greatest of these political poets was Ferdinand Freiligrath (born 1810 in Detmold, died 1876), a man of fine artistic sense and vivid imagination. He wrote the musical, touching lyrics *O lieb', so lang du lieben kannst*,⁵ *Die Auswanderer: Ich kann den Blick nicht von euch wenden*,⁶ the brilliantly colored descriptions of the tropics *Löwenritt*⁷ and *Der Mohrenfürst*,⁸ and the capital ballad *Prinz Eugen*.⁹ Freiligrath's most famous political poems are contained in the collections *Die Toten an die Lebenden*¹⁰ (1848) and *Neuere politische und sociale Gedichte*¹¹ (1849-51), among the latter especially *Von unten auf!*¹² The Franco-German War in 1870 drew from the aging poet two more impassioned poems, *Hurra Germania* and *Die Trompete von Gravelotte: Sie haben Tod und Verderben gespien*.¹³ Freiligrath was also a translator of taste and feeling, especially of his friend Longfellow and of Burns. The Saxon Julius Mosen (1803-67) wrote poems with political purposes, but his most effective work was in ballads on events in German and Austrian history; for example, *Andreas Hofer*, *Der Trom-*

¹ "Germany, Germany, o'er all else."

² "How could I e'er forget thee?"

³ "Faithful love e'en to the grave." ⁴ *Non-Political Songs*.

⁵ "Oh, love as long as love thou canst."

⁶ *The Emigrants*: "I cannot turn my gaze away from you."

⁷ *The Lion's Ride*.

⁸ *The Moorish Prince*.

⁹ *Prince Eugene*.

¹⁰ *The Dead to the Living*.

¹¹ *New Political and Social Poems*.

¹² *From Below Up!*

¹³ *The Trumpet of Gravelotte*: "Destruction and death they have hurled against us."

peter an der Katzbach,¹ and *Die letzten Zehn vom vierten Regiment*.² Other political poets who were widely known in the forties were Georg Herwegh (1817–75), the unbalanced author of *Gedichte eines Lebendigen*³ (1841 and 1844), and Franz Dingelstedt (1814–81), the poet of the *Lieder eines kosmopolitischen Nachtwächters*⁴ (1842). *Die Wacht am Rhein*⁵ was written by Max Schneckenburger (1819–49) in 1840.

Several Austrian poets rose in anger against the reactionary policy of Metternich, and wrote in accord with the spirit of Young Germany. The most gifted of these Austrians was the brooding, pessimistic poet Nikolaus Lenau, whose real name was Nikolaus Niernbsch (born 1802 in Hungary, died 1850). He was a romantic lyricist of deep elegiac feeling in *Der Postillon*⁶ and *Schilflieder*,⁷ a realistic poet of life among the people of Hungary in *Die Werbung*,⁸ *Die drei Zigeuner*,⁹ and *Die Heideschenke*,¹⁰ and a passionate champion of freedom of conscience in his lyrical epics *Savonarola* (1837) and *Die Albigenser*¹¹ (1842). Disgusted with political conditions in Austria, and disappointed in his journey to America, where he failed to find the freedom of his dreams, unhappy everywhere, Lenau grew more and more bitter, and at last died insane. In his poetry and in his lyrical drama *Faust* (1836) Lenau appears as one of the first of the many pessimists in nineteenth-century German literature. Anastasius Grün, the pseudonym of Count Anton von Auersperg (1806–76), was a follower of Romanti-

Lenau
(1802–50).

¹ *The Trumpeter of the Katzbach*, a small stream in Silesia.

² *The Last Ten Men of the 4th Regiment*.

³ *Poems of a Living Man*.

⁴ *Songs of a Cosmopolitan Night Watchman*.

⁵ *The Watch on the Rhine*.

⁶ *The Postilion*.

⁷ *Songs of the Rushes*.

⁸ *The Recruiting*.

⁹ *The Three Gypsies*.

¹⁰ *The Tavern on the Heath*.

¹¹ *The Albigenses*.

cism in his cycle of poems *Der letzte Ritter*¹ (1830), an epithet applied to Maximilian I; but Grün soon launched forth boldly against the Austrian government in his *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten*² (1831). Eduard von Bauernfeld (born 1802 in Vienna, died 1890) was a dramatist exclusively. In the comedy *Grossjährig*³ (1846) he wittily ridiculed the tyrannical police régime of contemporary Austria. His most finished and most amusing play is *Bürgerlich und Romantisch*⁴ (1835). The plays of Roderich Benedix (1811-73) are on a lower level than those of Bauernfeld in dramatic construction and in truth to life, but *Das bemooste Haupt*⁵ (1841) and other comedies by Benedix have entertained countless audiences.

The Young Germans were too much absorbed by their political aims and purposes to pay much heed to the cultivation of poetry, and people grew weary of literature devoted to politics. Hence the pure joy of creation and the expression of tender subjective emotion which we find in poems by Freiligrath, Lenau, and others, and which played no part in the work of the Young German movement, began to reassert themselves more and more generally. A distinct desire to revive the poetry of Romanticism appeared. The little epic *Otto der Schütz*⁶ (1843) by Gottfried Kinkel (1815-82), a vigorous apostle of liberalism in politics, is an echo of genuine Romanticism. Karl Simrock (1802-76), like the early Romanticists, revived old German poems; he translated several into modern German and began his version of the Dietrich saga, *Das Amelungenlied*,⁷ with a poem, *Wieland der Schmied*⁸ (1835), that is permeated

Romantic
Lyric Poets.

Simrock
(1802-76).

¹ *The Last Knight.*

² *Of Age.*

³ *The Gay Old Sport.*

⁷ *The Lay of the Amelungs.*

² *Strolls of a Viennese Poet.*

⁴ *Bourgeois and Romantic.*

⁶ *Otto the Marksman.*

⁸ *Wieland the Smith.*

with the true epic spirit. He also wrote the lyric *Warnung vor dem Rhein*¹ and several successful ballads, *Der versenkte Hort*,² *Der Schmied von Solingen*,³ and *Die halbe Flasche*.⁴ Count Moritz von Strachwitz (1822-47) proved his poetic gifts by the lyrics and ballads *Das Herz von Douglas*,⁵ *Helges Treue*,⁶ and *Der gefangene Admiral*⁷ as well as by the stirring stanzas entitled *Germania*.

The greatest lyric poet of this group, Eduard Mörike, took no part, poetical or otherwise, in the conflicts of these years, and it was a long time therefore before his gifts were generally recognized. Mörike (born 1804 in Ludwigsburg; died 1875 in Stuttgart) published first the artists' novel *Maler Nolten*⁸ (1832), a formless, imaginative work in the style of *Wilhelm Meister* and various Romantic novels; in spite of beauties in characterization, it derives its importance chiefly from the poems scattered through it. Much better prose works are the charming fairy tale *Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein*,⁹ with the interwoven *Historie von der schönen Lau*,¹⁰ and the short story *Mozart auf der Reise nach Prag*.¹¹ Mörike's distinction, however, rests upon his collected poems published first in 1838. Spontaneity and tenderness are the abiding charm of the popular lyrics *Das verlassene Mägdlein*,¹² *Soldatenbraut*,¹³ *Schön Rohtraut*,¹⁴ and *Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag*.¹⁵ Mörike was a poet who found expression without apparent effort for the secret emotions of the human heart and for the subtle charms of nature; for ex-

¹ *Warning to Shun the Rhine.*

² *The Smith of Solingen.*

³ *The Heart of Douglas.*

⁴ *The Captive Admiral.*

⁵ *The Stuttgart Brownie.*

⁶ *Mozart on the Journey to Prague.*

⁷ *The Soldier's Betrothed.*

⁸ *An Hour ere Break of Day.*

⁹ *The Sunken Hoard.*

¹⁰ *The Half-Bottle.*

¹¹ *Helge's Loyalty.*

¹² *Nolten the Painter.*

¹³ *The Story of Pretty Lau.*

¹⁴ *The Forsaken Maiden.*

¹⁵ *Fair Rohtraut.*

ample, in the lyrics *Denk' es, o Seele*,¹ *Im Frühling*,² *An einem Wintermorgen*,³ *Um Mitternacht*,⁴ *Lied vom Winde*,⁵ and *An eine Äolsharfe*.⁶ He showed gifts of jovial humor and vivid clearness in his idyls *Der alte Turmhahn*⁷ and *Idylle vom Bodensee*,⁸ and in poems written in imitation of the ancients. He was a master of simple suggestive language. Although his range is limited, Mörike is one of the most genuine, spontaneous lyric poets of German literature.

Two Austrians, Stifter and Halm, also show strong Romantic leanings. Adalbert Stifter (born 1805 in the Bohemian Forest, died 1868) remained untouched

Stifter
(1805-68).

by the political currents of his age. The isolated life of his native province is the subject of his best work, *Studien*⁹ (1844-50) and *Bunte Steine*¹⁰ (1852), collections of short stories which include several gems of descriptive art such as *Das Heidedorf*¹¹ and *Abdias*. Stifter's tales are uneven in value, but all of them are expressions of a poetic soul who overcame intense passion by simple piety. Stifter had a serious, sane view of life, and

Halm
(1806-71).

his romanticism was inborn. The dramatist Friedrich Halm (the pen-name of Eligius von Münch-Bellinghausen, 1806-71), on the other hand, seems to use romantic elements chiefly for the sake of artistic effect. His plays, *Griseldis* (1834), *Der Sohn der Wildnis*¹² (1842), *Der Fechter von Ravenna*¹³ (1854), and others, are more spectacular than true, but for a time they eclipsed the masterpieces of Grillparzer in general popularity.

¹ *Remember, oh Soul.*

² *In the Springtime.*

³ *On a Winter's Morning.*

⁴ *At Midnight.*

⁵ *Song of the Wind.*

⁶ *To an Æolian Harp.*

⁷ *The Old Weathercock on the Tower.*

⁸ *An Idyl of Lake Constance.*

⁹ *Studies.*

¹⁰ *Many-colored Stones.*

¹¹ *The Village on the Heath.*

¹² *The Son of the Wilderness*, performed in English also under the title *Ingomar*.

¹³ *The Gladiator of Ravenna.*

As mentioned above, Romanticism was a stimulus in many branches of science. Among the conspicuous scholars of the time who are notable here either as original authors or through their direct influence on literature, the Grimm brothers may again be named. Their worthy disciple and continuator as a master of Germanic philology, especially in text criticism, was Karl Lachmann (1793-1851). Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), a theologian of pious feeling and free, independent spirit, and the philosophers Fichte and Schelling have been mentioned already in connection with the Romantic School. Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831), who claimed that his philosophy could solve the deepest riddles of the universe and human life, was the most influential thinker of his time. His most bitter opponent, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), was a pessimistic philosopher whose influence on literature was not less deep than that of Hegel, but much later; Schopenhauer also stands high, from a purely literary point of view, on account of his mastery of style. The leading historians of the time are Friedrich von Raumer (1781-1873), the author of a well-written history of the Hohenstaufens, and Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), who united an amazing knowledge of the sources of history with rare art in presentation in *Die römischen Päpste des sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhunderts*¹ (1834-36), *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*,² and other works.

¹ *The History of the Papacy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*

² *History of Germany during the Reformation.*

CHAPTER XXI

THE MUNICH GROUP OF POETS. THE GROWTH OF REALISM. FROM 1848 TO 1870

THE years which followed the political revolutions of 1848 and 1849 brought many changes in German life and literature. Privileges which the revolutionists won for the people at large were soon forfeited by mistakes, but nevertheless an understanding for national, state, and civil life was permanently awakened. Middle-class society became conscious of its significance in public life. The periodicals, almanacs, and annuals in which amateurs in literature had found innocuous pleasure ceased publication or lost their importance; the hyperæsthetic literature of numerous salons was superseded by novels and dramas which embodied higher ideals. Authors now grasped their popular mission more clearly. They saw that art not only makes human existence more beautiful and attractive, but that it expresses and represents all phases of life which have any real significance; they saw that literature must remain in constant touch with reality. New standards were thus proclaimed, and there were men of talent and energy whose earliest works augured worthy achievement in line with these new ideals. Lyric poetry gave way to those forms of literature which, above all others, are able to present life, the drama and the novel.

Such a revolution was of course not accomplished at once, nor was it accomplished everywhere with the same force and finality. But even the writers who cherished classical and Romantic traditions sought a connection with real life. The most important

Changes in
Life and
Literary
Aims.

The Munich
Poets.

of the heirs of former times were the poets who were gathered together in Munich by Maximilian II, the art-loving king of Bavaria. The head of this group was the lyric poet Emanuel Geibel. Born in Lübeck in 1815-84). 1815, he was called to the Bavarian capital in 1851, where he remained for sixteen years the genial, sympathetic friend of innumerable admirers. He died in his native city in 1884. In his first collection of poems, published in 1840, Geibel is still under the romantic spell of Heine, Uhland, and Eichendorff, but he shows independent lyrical gifts in his very next collection, *Juniuslieder*¹ (1848). The *Neue Gedichte*² (1856), his best volume of verse, was followed by the collections *Gedichte und Gedankenblätter*³ (1864), *Heroldsrufe*⁴ (1871), and *Spätherbstblätter*⁵ (1877). His best-known single poems include the cycle *Ada* written in memory of his wife, who died three years after their marriage, the patriotic lyrics *Durch tiefe Nacht ein Brausen zieht*,⁶ *Nun lasst die Glocken*,⁷ *Flammt auf von allen Spitzen*,⁸ *Wer recht in Freuden wandern will*,⁹ *Der Mai ist gekommen*,¹⁰ and *Wenn sich zwei Herzen scheiden*,¹¹ the poems in free rhythms grouped under the title *Dichterlos*,¹² and the historical epic *Der Tod des Tiberius*.¹³ Melodious language and a joyous love of beauty are Geibel's distinguishing characteristics; his verses were a model for many minor poets. Lesser lyric and epic poets in the group around Geibel were Hermann Lingg (1820-1905), Julius Grosse (1828-1902), Count Adolf

¹ *Songs of Junius.*² *New Poems.*³ *Poems and Leaves of Remembrance.*⁴ *A Herald's Summons.*⁵ *Leaves of Late Autumn.*⁶ "A tumult surges through the night."⁷ "Now ring the bells."⁸ "Flare up from all the summits."⁹ "Whoe'er will roam in perfect joy."¹⁰ "Lo! May is here again."¹¹ "When two fond hearts must say farewell."¹² *Poet's Lot.*¹³ *The Death of Tiberius.*

von Schack (1815-94), who was an excellent translator of the Persian poet Firdausi, Heinrich Leuthold (1827-79), and Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819-92), whose *Lieder des Mirza Schaffy*¹ (1851) were once widely read. Wilhelm

Hertz (1835-1902) is remembered for his recreations of mediæval sagas, such as *Hugdietrichs Brautfahrt*² (1863) and *Bruder Rausch*,³ and for his modern German versions of Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan* (1877) and Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (1898); he also retold entertaining stories in verse by old French poets, especially those in his *Spielmannsbuch*⁴ (1886).

The works of Paul Heyse show a greater versatility and a more intimate knowledge of modern life than the products of any other member of the Munich group. Heyse was born in Berlin in 1830. He studied the Romance languages at the university, and after a year in Italy accepted, in 1854, Maximilian's call to Munich, which has been his chief place of residence ever since. Many of Heyse's short stories, the first of which, *L'Arrabbiata*,⁵ appeared in 1854, are little models of story-telling, *Auferstanden*,⁶ *Das Mädchen von Treppi*,⁷ *Andrea Delfin*, *Das Glück von Rothenburg*,⁸ *Siechentrost*,⁹ *Anfang und Ende*,¹⁰ *Die Stickerin von Treviso*,¹¹ and others. The theme of these stories is usually an interesting psychological problem. The scene is frequently laid in Italy; Heyse knows the Italian people through and through, and he describes their life with great art. In his novels Heyse deals chiefly with aristocratic and literary circles. The first and best of his novels *Kinder der Welt*¹² (1873) caused

¹ *Songs of Mirza Schaffy.*

² *Hugdietrich's Journey in Quest of a Bride.*

³ *Friar Rush.*

⁵ *The Vixen.*

⁷ *The Maiden of Treppi.*

⁹ A name, "Comforter of the Sick."

¹¹ *The Needle-woman of Treviso.*

⁴ *The Minstrel's Book.*

⁶ *Risen Again.*

⁸ *The Luck of Rothenburg.*

¹⁰ *Beginning and End.*

¹² *Children of the World.*

a sensation both by its admirable picture of contemporary life and by its frankly atheistic views. *Im Paradiese*¹ (1875) is a novel of artists' life in Munich, shallower in content but interesting in its details. Two of Heyse's many dramas, *Hans Lange* (1866) and *Colberg*² (1868), have been very successful in Germany on account of their glowing patriotism; *Maria von Magdala*³ (1899) has met with favor both at home and abroad. Heyse's most sincere and finished poems are *Über ein Stündlein*,⁴ *Welträt-sel*,⁵ *Ich wandle still den Waldespfad*,⁶ *Hat dich die Liebe berührt*,⁷ and the wonderful cycle *Meinen Toten*.⁸

Other lyric poets of the time besides those in the Munich group were Karl Gerok (1819-90), the author of the lyric collection *Palmblätter*⁹ (1857) and of the patriotic poems *Die Rosse von Gravelotte*¹⁰ and *Des deutschen Knaben Tischgebet*,¹¹ Hermann von Gilm (1812-64), whose most familiar poems are *Allerseelen*,¹² *Geduld! sagst du*,¹³ and *Es liegen Veilchen dunkelblau*,¹⁴ and Georg Fischer (1816-97), who wrote the patriotic song *Nur einen Mann aus Millionen*¹⁵ and many purely lyric poems.

One of the most favored products of literature during these years was the romantic story in verse. *Wald-meisters Brautfahrt*¹⁶ (1851), by Otto Roquette (1824-96), is a good illustration. This "tale of travel, of the Rhine and wine," Roquette's only successful

Minor
Poets.

Stories in
Verse.

¹ *In Paradise.*

² The name of a town on the Baltic Sea.

³ *Mary of Magdala.*

⁴ *And Yet an Hour.*

⁵ *Riddles of the Universe.*

⁶ "I wander down the forest path."

⁷ "If love has ever touched thee."

⁸ *To My Dead.*

⁹ *Palm Leaves.*

¹⁰ *The Steeds of Gravelotte.*

¹¹ *A German Boy's Grace at Table.*

¹² *All Souls'.*

¹³ "You say, Have patience!"

¹⁴ "There lie the dark-blue violets."

¹⁵ "One man alone in many millions."

¹⁶ *Woodruff's Journey in Pursuit of a Betrothed.*

literary venture, was extremely popular in its day. Two years after its appearance Joseph Viktor von Scheffel

Scheffel
(1826-86).

(born and died in Karlsruhe 1826-86) published his still more famous "song of the Upper Rhine," *Der Trompeter von Säckingen*,¹ the most spontaneous and pleasing of all the romantic stories in verse. Scheffel also wrote the collections of lyric poems *Frau Aventure*² and *Bergpsalmen*,³ and a group of rollicking student songs, *Gaudeamus*. Scheffel's masterpiece is the novel *Ekkehard* (1855), a picture of German life in the tenth century; it sprang from an enthusiastic study of the time, and it is executed with all of Scheffel's poetic warmth and with great power in characterization. Very different from Scheffel's humoristic style are the works of the Austrian

Hamerling
(1830-89).

Robert Hamerling (1830-89). In Hamerling's lyrics and epics romantic elements are combined with modern pessimism, especially in the spirited epics *Ahasver in Rom*⁴ (1866) and *Der König von Sion*⁵

Jordan
(1819-1904).

(1869). Another epic poet of the time besides Hamerling was Wilhelm Jordan (1819-1904). The best of Jordan's works is *Die Nibelunge*⁶ (1869-74), a restoration, in alliterative verse, of the famous German saga; it contains splendid pictures of the past, but it is weighted down with very modern wisdom.

The great master of the music drama, Richard Wagner (born 1813 in Leipsic, died 1883), revived various medi-

Wagner
(1813-83).

æval sagas with surpassing dramatic art in the librettos of *Tannhäuser* (first produced in 1845), *Lohengrin* (1850), *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), *Der Ring des Nibelungen*⁷ (1876), and *Parsifal* (1882). Wagner's vivid, sparkling presentation of the time of Hans

¹ *The Trumpeter of Säckingen.*

² *Mountain Psalms.*

³ *The King of Zion.*

⁴ *The Ring of the Nibelung.*

⁵ *My Lady Adventure.*

⁶ *Ahasuerus in Rome.*

⁷ *The Nibelungs.*

Sachs, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* ¹ (1868), is a classic German comedy. Wagner saw in the union of the arts, especially of poetry and music, the means to the noblest, fullest expression of life. The influence of Wagner has not only dominated later operatic music; the German stage has benefited vastly by the example of his productions of his operas in Bayreuth. From Wagner the German theatre had an opportunity to learn the artistic effect of a performance in which attention is paid to detail, and in which, above all, every individual part is subordinated to the whole.

The modern realistic drama celebrated its first triumphs in the works of Hebbel and Ludwig, the two greatest German dramatists since Kleist and Grillparzer. Both were tragic poets of unusual creative strength and individuality, both were students of Shakespeare and Kleist. With a religious seriousness both endeavored to exemplify the principle that the finished, poetic expression of absolute truth to life constitutes the highest art.

Friedrich Hebbel, who was born in Wesselburen, Holstein, March 25, 1813, was the son of a mason in very limited circumstances. Against the most desperate odds and assisted only by the unselfish devotion of an older friend, Elise Lensing, Hebbel gradually acquired an education, at first in his native province, and later in Hamburg, Heidelberg, and Munich. The generosity of King Christian VIII of Denmark enabled him to travel in France and Italy for two years. As he was returning in 1845, he stopped in Vienna, where he decided to settle. In 1846 he was married to the talented actress Christine Engehausen, and at once began to rise above the financial worries and the lack of appreciation on the part of his contemporaries which had threatened to blight his

The Drama
of Realism.

Hebbel
(1813-63).

¹ *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg.*

career. He died in Vienna, December 13, 1863, just after he had achieved his first undisputed success with his last drama, *Die Nibelungen*.¹ With almost superhuman strength Hebbel wrested his laurels from the fateful conditions of his early life and from an unappreciative age. He had a very high-strung disposition and he had a very keen analytic mind; his real feeling he rarely betrayed. Thus he was often brusque and forbidding, and he was understood and duly esteemed by few of his contemporaries.

Hebbel is much less gifted in poetry than in the drama, but originality and power are characteristic features of the lyrical poems *Winterlandschaft*,² *Das alte Haus*,³ *Grossmutter*,⁴ *Dem Schmerz sein Recht*,⁵ *Böser Ort*,⁶ and *Ich und Du*,⁷ and of the ballads *Der Heidenknabe*,⁸ *Das Kind am Brunnien*,⁹ *Bubensonntag*,¹⁰ *Der Brahmine*,¹¹ and *Vaterunser*.¹² Hebbel's charming little epic *Mutter und Kind*¹³ (1857) is in form an imitation of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*.

Hebbel's significance in literature lies in his dramas, in their intense passion, in their unrelenting analysis of human character, and in their command of the tragic. At times, indeed, his endeavor to search out and present the innermost secrets of human life leads him to a dissection of character whose ruthlessness offends our sensibilities, but his problems always command attention, and he is always master of them. His very first drama *Judith* (1840), in spite of its exaggerated conception of Holofernes and other faults, glows with the passion which distinguishes its author; it culminates in two clos-

Hebbel's
Dramas.

¹ *The Nibelungs.*

² *The Old House.*

³ *To Grief its Due.*

⁷ *I and Thou.*

⁹ *The Child at the Spring.*

¹¹ *The Brahmin.*

¹³ *Mother and Child.*

² *A Winter Landscape.*

⁴ *Grandmother.*

⁶ *An Evil Spot.*

⁸ *The Boy on the Heath.*

¹⁰ *A Boy's Sunday.*

¹² *The Lord's Prayer.*

ing acts of tremendous force. *Genoveva* (1841), a revival of a Romantic theme, is more restrained, cooler, and weaker than *Judith*. *Maria Magdalene* (1843) is a not unworthy successor of *Emilia Galotti* and *Kabale und Liebe*; its tragic elements, however, do not arise from a conflict between social classes, but from the oppressive limitations of life in a small community. Hebbel reached the acme of his powers after he had settled in Vienna. The weak, harsh features of his earlier plays now vanish, his feeling for truth remains, and the latter is united with a finer understanding of art. The four tragedies of this later period are Hebbel's greatest works; all except *Agnes Bernauer* are written in verse. *Herodes und Mariamne* (1848) tells the story of a woman's love which has been mortally wounded by the unjust suspicion of her husband. In *Agnes Bernauer* (1851), Hebbel introduces more of the native, popular elements than in any other of his dramas. Agnes Bernauer, a daughter of middle-class people, has been secretly married to a young Duke. During her husband's absence she is accused of witchcraft and drowned in the Danube, so that he may be free to fulfil his duties to the state. Thus her fate represents the curse of beauty and a victory of reasons of state over love. A story by Herodotus was the source of Hebbel's next drama, *Gyges und sein Ring*¹ (1854). The king of Lydia permits Gyges, a young Greek, to gaze upon the naked beauty of Queen Rhodope, Gyges being rendered invisible by means of a magic ring. When Rhodope learns of her disgrace, she impels Gyges to restore her honor by killing the king and marrying her; but as soon as they are married, Rhodope stabs herself. The verse in which Hebbel clad this tragedy of wounded womanly modesty is as a whole the best he ever wrote. Hebbel's most imposing though not most original work is *Die Nibelungen* (1861), a trilogy consisting of *Der ge-*

¹ *Gyges and His Ring.*

hörnte Siegfried,¹ *Siegfrieds Tod*,² and *Kriemhilds Rache*.³ It is a dramatization of the *Nibelungenlied* with softening, modern touches; for example, in the impression of the final catastrophe: Dietrich von Bern appears here as the representative of a gentler Christian view of life as opposed to heathenism, which has been overthrown, but is still untamed. The mixture of modern and mediæval elements detracts from the truth of the drama, but various individual scenes have great lyrical beauty and all of their author's dramatic power. Hebbel's play *Demetrius*, like Schiller's, was never finished.

Otto Ludwig was born in Eisfeld, in Thuringia, February 12, 1813, that is, in the same year as Hebbel. Acute

Ludwig
(1813-65).

suffering and poverty forced Ludwig to live the life of a recluse the greater part of his career. He died in Dresden, his home for many years, February 25, 1865. Ludwig was much hindered in his artistic development by external circumstances and by his relentless criticism and endless revision of his own works, due to worship of his model Shakespeare. In boldness of construction and in the perfect command of dramatic conflicts he is inferior to Hebbel, but he is his equal in the delineation of character, and he surpasses him in his extraordinary capacity of presenting a perfect setting and atmosphere for a given scene. The talent for comedy

which Ludwig showed in his early work *Hanns Frei* was unhappily not further developed.

Ludwig found life very serious and soon turned to tragedy. Here his merits as a dramatist appear at once in several dramas written early in his life, but not published until after his death; this is the case especially with the drama *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*,⁴ whose theme he borrowed from Hoffmann's story of the same title, and with the tragedy

¹ *Siegfried with the Horny Skin.*

³ *Kriemhild's Revenge.*

² *Siegfried's Death.*

⁴ *Mademoiselle de Scudéry.*

of middle-class life *Die Pfarrerrose*.¹ The tragedy *Der Erbförster*² (1850) established Ludwig's fame. An employee on an estate considers himself the hereditary forester because his father and grandfather held the same position before him; he believes that the new proprietor cannot legally displace him. When he refuses to obey an order, he receives his dismissal. Brooding revenge, he finally mistakes his own daughter for his master's son and shoots her. The attention to detail in this gloomy tragedy, the murmur of the forest throughout the action, and the admirable characterization stamp *Der Erbförster* as one of the most impressive products of German realism. In the tragedy *Die Makkabäer*³ (1852) Ludwig portrays a mother's heroic sacrifice and the power of national and religious enthusiasm. The high level of Ludwig's dramas is

His Stories.

maintained by the vivid village romances *Die Heiterethei*⁴ (1855), *Vom Regen in die Traufe*,⁵ and *Zwischen Himmel und Erde*⁶ (1856), all of which take place in the country around Ludwig's birthplace. The first and second of these are amusing sketches of middle-class provincial life, while the last one, Ludwig's best story, is faultless in construction and in dramatic vividness. Hebbel and Ludwig were not generally recognized in their true greatness until years after their death. Their uncompromising realism offended the taste of their time; people then preferred the theatrical cleverness and sentimentality of playwrights who have long since been forgotten.

Klaus Groth (1819-99) of Holstein opened a new vein of lyric poetry and revived recollections of
 Groth (1819-99). Hebel and Voss when he began to publish the poems he had written in his native dialect. His best col-

¹ *The Rose of the Parsonage.*

² *The Hereditary Forester.*

³ *The Maccabees.*

⁴ A name, "Sunshine."

⁵ *Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire.*

⁶ *Between Heaven and Earth.*

lection of verse is *Quickborn*¹ (1852). Groth grasped the popular life of Holstein with the eye of a true poet and used the Low German dialect most effectively in the expression of the humorous and serious.

The novel of realism developed much more richly and found much more appreciation than the realistic drama.

The Novel of Realism.

From the works of Charles Dickens novelists learned the art of presenting popular life with truth and humor. Gustav Freytag (born 1816 in Silesia, died 1895), who was once in active sympathy with the

Freytag (1816-95).

liberal aims of Young Germany, illustrates in his literary career the recession of the drama in favor of the novel. He began with several plays, the chief of which is *Die Journalisten*² (1853), the finest comedy on contemporary life since *Minna von Barnhelm*. Then he turned to the novel and depicted the life of German middle classes with humor and understanding, the life of merchants in *Soll und Haben*³ (1855), and that of scholars in *Die verlorene Handschrift*⁴ (1864). Freytag afterward took up the presentation of historical conditions. The graphic essays *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*⁵ (1859-62) include admirable studies of the life and character of Luther and Frederick the Great. Later, after the model of Arnim, Alexis, and Scheffel, Freytag wrote historical novels; these are in the form of a series of pictures of German life from the migration of the races in the fourth and fifth centuries down to the Revolution of 1848; of the eight novels forming this series entitled *Die Ahnen*⁶ (1872-80), the first, *Ingo und Ingraban*, and the fifth, *Marcus König*, are the best.

Groth's poems were the original inspiration of the Low German dialect stories and poems by Fritz Reuter (1810-

¹ *Fountain of Youth.*

² *Debit and Credit.*

³ *Pictures of the German Past.*

² *Journalists.*

⁴ *The Lost Manuscript.*

⁶ *Our Ancestors.*

74), a native of Mecklenburg; but where Groth was a lyric poet, Reuter was a realistic novelist. Reuter's greatest achievement is the prose work *Olle Kamellen*¹ (1860-64), which is composed of three parts, *Ut de Franzosentid*,² *Ut mine Festungstid*,³ and *Ut mine Stromtid*.⁴ The second of these is a record of the seven years' imprisonment which Reuter had to suffer because as a student he had worn the colors of a society opposed to the reactionary spirit of the time. *Ut mine Stromtid*, which is based on events and observations of Reuter's life as an agriculturist in his native province, is the most vital and significant part of *Olle Kamellen*. No one before or after Reuter has ever drawn a more varied, more truthful picture of life in a German province than Reuter gave here of Mecklenburg. He is a master of realism, of hearty, popular humor, and of pathos. The best of his other works are the novel *Dörchläuchting*⁵ (1866) and the story in verse *Kein Hüsung*⁶ (1858). These, like his chief work, are favorite books of the whole nation in spite of their dialect.

Like Reuter, the novelist Wilhelm Raabe (born 1831) is noted for his humor, but Raabe's is not the naïve spontaneous fun of the people. He laughs at his characters rather than with them, but it is a kindly, indulgent laugh at the weaknesses of men. His humor has thus the gentle, ironical cast of Dickens, and especially of Jean Paul, whom he admired profoundly and whom he resembles in many respects. Raabe is very fond of side remarks and of intruding his own personality upon the reader, but in spite of his artificialities of style, he is a convincing, interesting realist, especially in the depiction of life in small towns. Raabe has a deep love of mankind,

¹ *Old Stories.*

² *My Imprisonment.*

³ *His Little Serene Highness.*

⁴ *During the French Régime.*

⁵ *A Story of My Farming Days.*

⁶ *Without Shelter.*

and with all his humor he has a very serious conception of life. He is not afraid to present harsh realities, but in his best works he finds an inspiring solution for the problems of life. For several decades only a small circle of Raabe's countrymen appreciated his power of characterization and his great warm heart. *Die Chronik der Sperlingsgasse*,¹ which appeared in 1856, was Raabe's first work. After a succession of minor stories, he wrote *Die Leute aus dem Walde*² (1863) and then advanced to his three greatest works, *Der Hungerpastor*³ (1864), *Abu Telfan* (1867), and *Der Schüdderump* (1870). Raabe also followed the fondness of the time for short stories, and wrote several of striking beauty, among others *Der Junker von Denow*,⁴ *Der Marsch nach Hause*,⁵ and *Im Siegeskranze*.⁶

The two greatest exponents of the German short story, Theodor Storm and Gottfried Keller, acquired their first fame in the fifties. The first story published by Storm (born 1817 in Schleswig, died 1888) was *Immensee* (1852), a romantic story of wistful resignation, with scenes of warm, sympathetic coloring.

Storm's next stories were more vigorous, they had a more substantial content, and they were not less sincere, especially *In St. Jürgen*, *Viola tricolor*, *Pole Poppenspüler*,⁷ and *Psyche*. The long series of stories which Storm wrote in his last years consists mainly of character studies and includes his best work, *Aquis submersus*⁸ (1876), *Renate, Eekenhof*, *Der Herr Etatsrat*,⁹ *Zur Chronik von Grieshuus*,¹⁰ *Ein Doppelgänger*,¹¹ and *Der Schimmelreiter*¹² (1888). Storm's love for his native prov-

¹ *A Chronicle of Sparrow Alley.*

² *The Hunger Pastor.*

³ *The Homeward March.*

⁴ *Paul the Puppet-player.*

⁵ *The Councillor of State.*

⁶ *A Note to the Chronicle of Grieshuus.*

⁷ *A Double.*

⁸ *People from the Forest.*

⁹ *The Squire of Denow.*

¹⁰ *In the Wreath of Triumph.*

¹¹ *Submerged in the Waters.*

¹² *The Rider of the White Horse.*

ince, which appears very often in his stories, is reflected most directly in his collection of poems first published in 1852. The most beautiful of these include *Oktoberlied: Der Nebel steigt, es fällt das Laub*,¹ *Elisabeth*, and *Die Nachtigall*,² the splendid nature pictures *Abseits*³ and *Die Stadt*,⁴ the moving lament for the dead *Das aber kann ich nicht ertragen*,⁵ and the brief, touching verses *Lied des Harfenmädchens*,⁶ *Juli: Klingt im Wind ein Wiegenlied*,⁷ *Trost: So komme, was da kommen mag*,⁸ *Waisenkind*,⁹ and *Über die Heide*.¹⁰

Gottfried Keller, who was born in Zurich, July 19, 1819, began life by studying painting in Munich, but in 1848 he entered the university at Heidelberg, and there soon learned that his greatest talents lay in literature. After several years in Berlin, where he wrote his first novel and his first short stories, Keller returned in 1855 to Zurich, where he died July 15, 1890. Keller united the past and present as no other novelist of his time. He depicted contemporary life, especially that of his native country, with absolute truth, and yet he gave his pictures the glamour of pure Romanticism. His striking originality appears in his earliest novel, *Der grüne Heinrich*,¹¹ which was first published in 1854-55 and revised in 1879-80. It is related to *Wilhelm Meister* in various ways; it is a story of character development, it has a wealth of poetic beauty, and it, too, reflects its author's youth and young manhood. Keller's masterpiece, *Die Leute von Seldwyla*¹² (first volume 1856), is a collection of stories whose scenes are laid in

¹ *October Song*: "The mist ascends, the leaves drop down."

² *The Nightingale*.

³ *Apart from the World*.

⁴ *The City*.

⁵ "But that I never can endure."

⁶ *The Harp Girl's Song*.

⁷ *July*: "Borne on the wind a lullaby."

⁸ *Consolation*: "Whate'er may come, so let it be."

⁹ *The Orphan*.

¹⁰ *Over the Heath*.

¹¹ *Green Henry*.

¹² *People of Seldwyla*.

towns and villages of Keller's native country. Romantic and realistic, these stories range from the thrilling tragedy of *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*¹ to the genial comedy of *Die drei gerechten Kammacher*.² After long silence the poet further enriched literature during the seventies with his poetic and humorous *Sieben Legenden*,³ which consists of new versions of legends of the saints. Five more stories for a second volume of *Die Leute von Seldwyla* include the popular *Dietegen*; the volume *Züricher Novellen*⁴ (1878) contains *Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten*,⁵ the charming story *Hadlaub*, which treats the origin of the Manesse collection of mediæval minnesongs,⁶ and the humoristic sketch *Der Landvogt von Greifensee*.⁷ In 1882 six stories connected by a common theme, the choice of a wife, appeared under the title *Das Sinngedicht*.⁸ Keller ended his career with a novel on the political life of Switzerland, *Martin Salander* (1886). Keller's sturdy, manly attitude toward life is characteristic also of his lyrical poems, especially of *Abendlied: Augen, meine lieben Fensterlein*,⁹ *Sommer-nacht: Es wallt das Korn weit in die Runde*,¹⁰ *Abendregen: Langsam und schimmernd fiel ein Regen*,¹¹ and *Winternacht: Nicht ein Flügelschlag ging durch die Welt*.¹²

Two other gifted story-tellers published their first works during the period under discussion, Wilhelm von Riehl, the creator of the short story illustrating the life of past centuries, and the novelist Friedrich Spielhagen. Riehl (1823-97) embodied in his stories,

Riehl

(1823-97).

¹ A Village Romeo and Juliet. ² The Three Just Comb Makers.

³ Seven Legends.

⁴ Zurich Tales.

⁵ The Banner of the Seven Upright.

⁶ Cf. above, p. 51.

⁷ The Governor of Greifensee.

⁸ The Epigram.

⁹ Evening Song: "Eyes of mine, beloved windows."

¹⁰ A Summer Night: "The grain is waving far around me."

¹¹ Rain at Evening: "Slowly and shimmering rain was falling."

¹² A Winter's Night: "Not a wing could we hear through the night."

*Kulturgeschichtliche Novellen*¹ (1856) and others, not only the poetic results of a scholar's investigations—he was a professor of history at the university in Munich—but also true human portraits of lasting value. The novels of Spielhagen (born 1829) have been, almost without exception, novels with a purpose. The first one to bring fame to its author, *Problematische Naturen*² (1862), champions extreme political liberalism, *In Reih' und Glied*³ (1866) advances schemes for the good of the working classes, *Hammer und Amboss*⁴ (1869) deals with the conflict between capital and labor. Spielhagen has written many novels, but the last one which can be compared with the three mentioned is *Sturmflut*⁵ (1876), a picture of the financial situation in Germany after the Franco-German War. The political or social purpose of Spielhagen's novels is often too conspicuous, but their variety of incident and their smooth narrative still attract many readers.

¹ *Stories of Popular Life in Past Times.*

² *Problematic Characters.*

⁴ *Hammer and Anvil.*

³ *In Rank and File.*

⁵ *The Tidal Wave.*

CHAPTER XXII

TRANSITION TO NEW IDEALS. FROM 1870 TO 1888

THE national awakening of the German people had begun as early as the years which led up to the events of 1813. The Revolution of 1848 had brought a far more general understanding for political life, and now in 1871 the dream and the ambition of the century were realized in the establishment of the modern German Empire, the direct outgrowth of the Franco-German War of 1870 and 1871. The new prestige of the German name and the vastly larger life which followed led men to expect a corresponding new era in literature, a new classical period, but it never came. The events of 1870 and 1871 left almost no immediate traces on German literature. A few patriotic lyrics, such as Geibel's *Heroldsrufe*, and poems by Georg Fischer, Freiligrath, Gerok, and Jensen, form the only direct expression of the new national spirit. In the following years as well, little real poetry appeared. The drama was dominated for years by ephemeral imitations of French plays, and thus it fared hardly better than poetry. To be sure, the seventies saw the production in Bayreuth of Wagner's music drama *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, the first national achievement of the new empire, and in the following decade Wildenbruch's historical dramas found a hearing; but these are the only notable facts in the history of the drama between 1870 and the end of the eighties. In the case of the novel and short story, matters were more encouraging. Although few of the older authors in-

The Establishment of the Modern German Empire and the Succeeding Years in Literature.

creased their fame, several unknown writers with very evident talent appeared. The first years of the present empire were, for poetry and the drama at least, a comparatively barren season of transition; but, as we shall see, a generation was growing up which was destined to bring new forces into German literature.

Outside the empire, in Austria, the drama of the seventies is remarkable through the revival of the popular drama by Ludwig Anzengruber (born 1839 in Vienna, died 1889), a worthy successor of Raimund. Anzengruber's peasant plays in dialect were at first marred by a too apparent purpose to preach liberalism, thus *Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld*¹ (1870); but they are true to life and admirably constructed, especially *Die Kreuzelschreiber*² (1872), *Der Meineidbauer*³ (1872), *Der G'wissenswurm*⁴ (1874), *Der Doppelselbstmord*⁵ (1876), and *Das vierte Gebot*⁶ (1878). Anzengruber's village story *Der Sternsteinhof*,⁷ like his dramas, is realistic, and has deep feeling and genuine popular humor.

Within the German empire, the history of the drama during the seventies is marked chiefly by the tours of a troupe of actors. They were the "Meininger," or the actors of the Court Theatre in the little duchy of Saxe-Meiningen. Like Wagner at Bayreuth, the Meininger laid great emphasis upon detail and subordinated individual parts to the whole; they also endeavored to present plays in thorough accord with the ideas of the dramatist. Their first series of performances in Berlin, in May, 1874, created a sensation through its immediate success and through its influ-

The Revival
of the Popu-
lar Drama in
Austria.

Anzengruber
(1839-89).

The Drama
within the
Empire.

The
"Meininger."

¹ *The Pastor of Kirchfeld.*

² *The Perjured Peasant.*

³ *The Double Suicide.*

⁴ *The Fourth (in English, Fifth) Commandment.*

⁵ *The Star-Stone Farm.*

⁶ *The Cross Signers.*

⁷ *The Worm of Conscience.*

ence. Then and later they infused new life into the classic dramas of German literature, but the repertory of the Meininger was not limited to the classics. They also introduced young, unknown dramatists to German audiences. The most important of these was Ernst von Wildenbruch

Wildenbruch
(1845-1909).

(1845-1909), whose tragedy *Die Karolinger*¹ was first produced by the Meininger in 1881. An enthusiastic, ambitious poet with an intimate knowledge of the stage, Wildenbruch followed a current of the time and wrote chiefly plays dealing with the German past; he is the leading representative of the modern historical drama. In *Harold* (1882), *Die Karolinger* (1882), *Der Mennonit*² (1882), *Christoph Marlow*³ (1884), and *Heinrich und Heinrichs Geschlecht*⁴ (1896), and in the plays which embody events from the history of the Hohenzollerns, *Die Quitzows* (1888), *Der Generalfeldoberst*⁵ (1889), *Der neue Herr*⁶ (1891), and others, there are passages which remind us of Schiller's thrilling eloquence and of Kleist's passion; but Wildenbruch is often theatrical rather than dramatic, and his plays are weak in characterization. Wildenbruch's stories, *Das edle Blut*⁷ (1893) and others, are told with warm feeling, but they are unimportant as compared with his dramas. Schiller was a model of other playwrights of the time besides Wildenbruch, but

Minor
Dramatists.

their dramas achieved only a transitory fame at best. The most successful plays of these years were those on the manners of contemporary society written partly in imitation of the French by Gustav von Moser (born 1829), Paul Lindau (born 1839), Oscar Blumenthal (born 1852), and others, several of whom are still writing plays of the same character. The dramas of these men

¹ *The Carolingians.*

² *Christopher Marlowe.*

³ *The Generalissimo.*

⁷ *Noble Blood.*

² *The Mennonite.*

⁴ *Henry and Henry's Race.*

⁶ *The New Lord.*

have always, however, lacked any aim other than that of passing entertainment, and they are devoid of literary merit.

Martin Greif, the pen-name of Hermann Frey (born 1839), wrote a series of historical dramas, but his lyrics, which were first published in 1868, are the basis of his fame; they have rare purity of feeling and a simplicity of form like that of the folk-song and some of Goethe's poems. Greif's countrymen were slow in recognizing his merits as a poet, but some of his lyrics, such as *Im Walde*¹ and *Sonnenuntergang*,² have won a place among the best products of German poetry. The clear, vivid verses of Karl Stieler (1842-85), especially his *Winteridyll*³ (1885) and his dialect poems, have always been popular. As in the drama, public interest in poetry was largely concentrated upon the amusing and ephemeral. The great vogue which Scheffel enjoyed inspired a host of minor poets who fostered so-called *Butzenscheibenlyrik*, "lyrics of leaded panes," or poetry which aimed at the revival of the spirit and life of olden times, and advanced no farther than casement windows or mere externalities. These lyrics are, for the most part, scattered through romances in verse which were written in imitation of *Der Trompeter von Säkkingen. Dreizehnlinden* (1878), by Friedrich Wilhelm Weber (1813-94), is the best of these romances, but Rudolf Baumbach (1840-1905), the author of numerous jovial verses such as *Keinen Tropfen im Becher mehr*,⁴ also found a large audience for his little epics *Zlatorog* (1877) and *Frau Holde*⁵ (1881), and Julius Wolff (born 1834) achieved some repute through his romance *Der wilde Jäger*⁶ (1877).

¹ *In the Forest.*

² *A Winter Idyl.*

³ "Not a drop in the goblet now."

⁴ *Lady Fair.*

² *Sunset.*

⁶ *The Wild Huntsman.*

The short story and the novel are the only forms of literature which in the seventies and early eighties found due favor and treatment. In this field, indeed, the political events of 1870-71 were indirectly of notable consequence for German literature: they determined one of the best German story-tellers, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-98), a native of Zurich, to write in German exclusively instead of alternating between German and French, as he had done before the Franco-German War. With Freytag and Riehl, Meyer is a leader in historical fiction; he reconstructs the past with an intimate understanding of his subject and with the style of a prose artist. His first story *Jürg Jenatsch* (1876), a tale of the 'Thirty Years' War, was followed by a long series of vigorous, truthful historical narratives, *Der Heilige*¹ (1880) a story about Thomas à Becket, *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*² (1884), *Die Richterin*³ (1885), *Die Versuchung des Pescara*⁴ (1887), and the group of stories published in 1883, *Das Amulett*,⁵ *Gustav Adolfs Page*,⁶ and *Das Leiden eines Knaben*.⁷ Meyer also wrote a number of stirring ballads and rather reserved unemotional lyrics. The romantic elements of the first stories by Wilhelm Jensen (born 1837), *Die braune Erica*⁸ (1868) and others, suggest a comparison with his model Theodor Storm, but Jensen's best stories are those which mingle romanticism and real life, *Karin von Schweden* (1878), *Eddystone*, *Die Pfeifer von Dusenbach*,⁹ *Runensteine*,¹⁰ (1888), and *Luv und lee*.¹¹ These together with lyrical poems, long stories in verse,

The Short
Story and the
Novel.

Meyer
(1825-98).

Jensen
(born 1837).

¹ *The Saint.*

² *The Woman Judge.*

³ *The Charm.*

⁷ *The Suffering of a Boy.*

⁹ *The Fifers of Dusenbach.*

¹¹ *Windward and Leeward.*

³ *The Monk's Marriage.*

⁴ *The Tempting of Pescara.*

⁶ *The Page of Gustavus Adolphus.*

⁸ *Brown Erica.*

¹⁰ *Runic Stones.*

and dramas bear witness to the wide range of Jensen's talents.

Theodor Fontane (born 1819 in Neuruppin, not far to the north-west of Berlin; died 1898) began his literary career as a poet, winning his first fame as the author of the spirited ballads *Archibald Douglas*, *Der Tag von Hemmingstedt*,¹ and others. After writing a vivid description of his native province, *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*² (1862-82), Fontane turned, late in life, to story-telling. His first novel, *Vor dem Sturm*³ (1878), a story of the days which preceded the uprising of 1813, justified the change; he showed himself at once the equal of Willibald Alexis in large historical conception and in vivid characterization. The short stories which followed, *Grete Minde* (1880) and others, were stepping-stones to realism. Fontane's most striking characteristics, his knowledge and understanding of modern people and his art of characterizing through conversation, are first revealed in his realistic novels of contemporary life, *Irrungen Wirrungen*⁴ (1888), *Frau Jenny Treibel* (1892), *Effi Briest* (1895), his greatest work, and *Der Stechlin* (1898). His autobiographical writings, especially *Meine Kinderjahre*⁵ (1894), reflect a charming personality.

Two prominent Austrians first attracted the attention of the general public during the seventies, Peter Rosegger and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. Rosegger (born 1843), a son of a Styrian peasant, has found his inspiration, like Anzengruber, in the popular life of his native country. His works are not lacking in humor, but they incline rather to the sentimental and didactic; the forests and mountains of Styria are the back-

¹ *The Day of Hemmingstedt.*

² *Wanderings through Mark Brandenburg.*

³ *Before the Storm.*

⁴ *Delusion, Confusion.*

⁵ *My Childhood.*

ground of nearly all his stories. Besides the village tales *Dorfsünden*¹ and others, Rosegger has written many novels on provincial life, *Waldheimat*² (1873), which is largely autobiographical, *Die Schriften des Waldschulmeisters*³ (1875), *Der Gottsucher*⁴ (1883), *Das ewige Licht*⁵ (1897), and others. Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

**Ebner-
Eschenbach**
(born 1830).

(born 1830), who is a singular combination of feminine kindliness and masculine vigor, has won a large audience through such novels as *Božena* (1876), *Das Gemeindekind*⁶ (1887), *Unsühnbar*⁷ (1890), and others, and through such short stories as *Lotti die Uhrmacherin*,⁸ *Die Freiherren von Gemperlein*,⁹ and *Krambambuli*. Frau Ebner has keen powers of observation, genuine humor, and a fine sense of artistic proportion. Luise von François (1817-93), who was born in central Germany, was gifted chiefly in the presentation of types, particularly those of the higher classes; *Die letzte Reckenburgerin*¹⁰ (1871), in large part a record of personal experiences, is one of the best novels of the period.

Realism was also the aim of other less talented authors. Hans Hoffmann (1848-1909) wrote humorous stories like *Der eiserne Rittmeister*¹¹ (1890) and others of tragic content such as *Landsturm*¹² (1892). Adolf Stern (1835-1907) united mature culture and well-trained talents in the thoughtful short stories *Der Pate des Todes*¹³ and *Das Weihnachtsoratorium*,¹⁴ and in the novels *Die letzten Humanisten*¹⁵ (1880) and *Ohne Ideale*¹⁶

¹ Village Sins.

² Forest Home.

³ Papers of a Forest Schoolmaster.

⁴ The God Seeker.

⁵ Light Eternal.

⁶ The Child of the Parish.

⁷ Beyond Atonement.

⁸ Lotti the Watchmaker.

⁹ The Barons of Gemperlein.

¹⁰ The Last of the Reckenburgers.

¹¹ The Iron Captain of the Horse.

¹² The Levy of the People.

¹³ Death's Godchild.

¹⁴ The Christmas Oratorio.

¹⁵ The Last Humanists.

¹⁶ Without Ideals.

(1882). The novel *Die Osterinsel*¹ (1895) and the poetic drama *Der Meister von Palmyra*² (1889), by Adolf Wilbrandt (born 1837), present questions of the time and metaphysical ideas. Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1807–87), a professor of æsthetics in Stuttgart, is memorable in pure literature for a humorous novel *Auch einer*³ (1879), as well as for a collection of poems *Lyrische Gänge*⁴ (1882). Stories of considerable merit were also written by Ferdinand von Saar (1833–1906): *Novellen aus Österreich*⁵ (1877–97), by Heinrich Steinhausen (born 1836): *Irmela* (1881) and *Heinrich Zwiesels Ängste*⁶ (1899), and by Heinrich Seidel (1842–1906): *Leberecht Hühnchen* (1882). The historical novel constructed after the model of Schefel's *Ekkehard* and Freytag's *Ahnen* was very widely read during these years, but most of the novels of this kind have been forgotten. Two of the most popular writers of historical fiction were Felix Dahn (born 1834) and the Egyptologist Georg Ebers (1837–98). Dahn's chief work is *Ein Kampf um Rom*⁷ (1876). The first novel by Ebers was *Eine ägyptische Königstochter*⁸ (1864); his best is *Homo Sum* (1878).

Since 1848 the field of historical writing has been dominated by Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903) and Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–96), each of whom was a man of striking, strong personality. Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte*⁹ (1854–56) established a new era in the study of Roman history; Treitschke's *Historische und Politische Aufsätze*¹⁰ and *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*¹¹ (1879–94) are eloquent testimonials of his command of complex periods

The Leading
Historians
since 1848.

¹ *The Island of the East.*

² *Another.*

³ *Tales from Austria.*

⁴ *A Struggle for Rome.*

⁵ *History of Rome.*

⁶ *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century.*

⁷ *The Master of Palmyra.*

⁸ *Lyrical Excursions.*

⁹ *Henry Zwiesel's Torments.*

¹⁰ *An Egyptian Princess.*

¹¹ *Historical and Political Essays.*

in European history. Freytag and Riehl in their essays and stories, and the distinguished scholar Jakob Burckhardt (1818-97) in his *Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*¹ (1860), were the leading spokesmen of history dealing with the progress of civilization and culture.

The history of German literature was first treated in full by Karl August Koberstein (1797-1870) in his *Grundriss zur Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*² (1827) and by Georg Gervinus (1805-71) in his *Geschichte der Deutschen Dichtung*³ (1835-42). The former's division of German literature into its different periods and groups became a model for later historians; Gervinus is biassed, but penetrating and original. The *Geschichte der poetischen Nationalliteratur der Deutschen*⁴ (1845) by August Vilmar (1800-68) is more popular and less scientific than either of its predecessors, but even for scholars Vilmar's presentation of mediæval poetry may still be considered exemplary. None of these histories, however, has now the breadth or the depth of influence among students of German literature which can be claimed for the *Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*⁵ (1883) by Wilhelm Scherer (1841-86). Starting out with an incomparable knowledge of his subject, Scherer arrived at views of men and literature which later criticism has altered only in minor details. Hermann Hettner (1821-82) presents the development of German, French, and English literature and thought in the eighteenth century in his clear and animated *Literaturgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*⁶ (1856-70). Four masterpieces in biographical art and thorough scholarship are *Michel Angelo*

¹ *The Italian Renaissance.*

² *Outline History of German Literature.*

³ *History of German Literature.*

⁴ *History of the National Poetical Literature of Germany.*

⁵ *History of German Literature.*

⁶ *History of Eighteenth Century Literature.*

(1860-63) by Herman Grimm (1828-1901), *Winckelmann* (1866-72) by Karl Justi (born 1832), *Herder* (1877-85) by Rudolf Haym (1821-1901), and *Lessing* (1884-91) by Erich Schmidt (born 1853). Kuno Fischer (1824-1907), a professor of philosophy at Heidelberg, wrote a series of acute, stimulating essays on Goethe. David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74), the famous sceptical author of *Das Leben Jesu*¹ (1835-36), may also be mentioned here on account of his literary portraits of Ulrich von Hutten and Voltaire.

¹ *The Life of Jesus.*

CHAPTER XXIII

RECENT GERMAN LITERATURE. NATURALISM AND SYMBOLISM. FROM 1888 TO THE PRESENT

TOWARD the end of the eighties a fermentation started up in German literary life not unlike the Storm and Stress movement of the eighteenth century. Again it was a revolutionary cry of young men, who aimed to overthrow the old and to establish a new order of things, but in these latter days citizens of a constitutional empire had no need to demand such far-reaching political reforms as before. The leaders of the Storm and Stress of recent years purposed to instigate extensive improvements in social conditions, but, first of all, they intended to revolutionize German literature. Their starting-point was a deep, sincere desire to rescue German literature from the distressing mediocrity into which it had fallen; they precipitated the agitation when they proclaimed the gospel of naturalism.

Disgusted by conditions at home, a group of young Germans had made a study of various foreign authors, especially of Ibsen, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoi, Zola and Maupassant. Under the influence of these writers and versed in the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, as will be shown presently, the group advanced to the declaration of a "Revolution of literature." First, they set aside in theory all previous standards of German literary art. An author was to be influenced neither by the form nor by the content of the literature of the past; born of a new time, he was to create for a new, modern world. In the place of the old stand-

The Origin
and Main
Principles of
Naturalism.

ards, they offered naturalism. According to the latter, the sole end of literature was to be an exact, purely objective presentation of life, that is, no detail of human existence was to be too insignificant for attention; nothing was to be merely suggested, nothing was to be left to the imagination, and no presentation of life was to be colored by the author's personal feeling. Further, the phases of life treated in literature were to be those which involved a consideration of questions of the time, above all, of social problems. The revolutionary character of naturalism led to violent controversies. At first a butt of contemptuous ridicule and then gradually enlisting the respect and services of men of standing, the movement provoked such an enormous number of attacks and defences, that it appears, at a general survey, much more polemical than creative. Its sponsors were the critics Heinrich Hart (born 1855) and his brother Julius (born 1859), Paul Schlenther (born 1854), and Otto Brahm (born 1856). During the eighties these men were living in Berlin, and there they and their followers constructed the creed which prevailed in the imperial capital and to a lesser extent in other German cities. Naturalism was strongest about 1890. Few authors of those days did not at some time write in accord with the new spirit; but the influence of the movement, in a more or less modified form, is still strong in German literature.

Naturalism created a new type only in the drama. Here the dialogue is an exact reproduction of the speech of every-day life: the unfinished sentence, the monosyllabic interjection and exclamation, the nervous repetition of words and ideas, the unvarnished vulgarities of the lower classes, and other characteristics of daily speech. Monologues and "asides" are not employed, because they are said to be untrue and incredible in real life. The most minute stage directions are given, including a diagram for the scene; for the actors

Its Chief
Form of
Expression.

the gestures are prescribed at every turn, even such details as the color of the eyes and the shape of the hands have been specified. Thus, the naturalists claim they achieve the effect of absolute truth to life.

Naturalism is based primarily on a theory taken from natural science and materialistic philosophy. This is, that the individual, born with certain inherited mental and physical characteristics, is a product of the union of these elements with the forces of his immediate environment, his *milieu*; he can escape from neither the one nor the other. The strength of naturalism lies in its presentation of the *milieu*; in setting this forth with infinite attention to detail it often presents a small segment of life with overwhelming truth. By its exposition of inherited traits of character and its minute portrayal of the *milieu* it seeks to reveal inner motives, and does reveal them at times with convincing force. But, owing to its basic theory that the individual is determined and governed by heredity and environment, naturalism, when perfectly consistent in the application of its principles, can not present an action that develops within a character, nor an action that develops through a conflict between the wills of different characters. Further, naturalism, in the embodiments which it has received, prefers the unpleasant and morbid to the cheerful and wholesome; the typical naturalistic drama presents a man who is oppressed by hopeless conditions and circumstances, and who in the end is utterly crushed by them. Bound fast to the reproduction of the infinitely little, naturalism has never treated a great inspiring, stimulating subject; it has lacked a broad horizon. It does not elevate and strengthen, but oppresses and stifles.

The pessimism which hovers over the naturalistic drama marks the culmination of Schopenhauer's influence. The ultimate conclusion of his philosophy is here illustrated,

existence is a calamity. Another more recent philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), who, like Schopenhauer, was master of a brilliant prose style, affected German literature of the last two decades even more deeply and broadly, especially through the works *Also sprach Zarathustra*¹ (1883-92), *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*² (1886), and *Gedichte und Sprüche*³ (1898). Nietzsche broke completely with the prevailing conceptions of good and evil. He attempted to establish an entirely new set of ethical and moral standards, a "revaluation of values," and hence he started out by rejecting conscience, morality, and all the noble impulses of humanity. Altruism was especially abhorrent to him, because he saw in it only the nurture of the weak at the expense of the strong, and this meant to him an ultimate world composed of men of a low average type. He exalted the beast in man and advocated a return to a reign of physical force where stronger men would rule by natural right, and where they would form a separate superior caste having no duties and yet all privileges; an exponent of such a caste is Nietzsche's "blond beast" or "super-man." This view of modern conditions as absolutely hopeless, this complete rejection of the standards of the past, and this exaltation of the brutal which are component parts of Nietzsche's philosophy, are salient features of naturalism. But Nietzsche's influence on literature went still farther.

The lack of imagination and feeling in naturalism led men, even in the early nineties, to seek a new ideal. They found it at hand in the symbolism of Nietzsche, to a lesser degree in that of Ibsen and the Dane Jacobsen, and later in that of the Belgian Maeterlinck. Symbolism, also

The
Influence of
Schopenhauer
and Nietzsche
on Natural-
ism.

¹ Thus Spake Zarathustra, i. e., Zoroaster.

² Beyond Good and Evil.

³ Poems and Aphorisms.

called Modern Romanticism, grasps none of the elements of life as a pure, absolute reality; to whatever it touches it ascribes an underlying, mystical meaning. Thus the poet of symbolism turns away from the world of facts and seeks to find out hidden secrets in nature and in human life; the purpose of his poetry is to impart to the reader the impressions which he has received. But his undefinable poetic feeling for nature and his nebulous longing to solve her riddles lead the symbolistic poet to a fantastic, half-hysterical view of all life. Everything objective, even every-day life, becomes hazy in the ecstatic moods to which the poet surrenders. In the drama and the novel the connection between the object described and that which it symbolizes is so obscure that the reader is often completely lost. This Modern Romanticism does not present great humanity, vigorous, progressive aspiration, any more than naturalism does. With all their faults, however, these two currents in literary art brought new life into German literature. Naturalism taught men a closer observation of their immediate environment, and Modern Romanticism taught a more intimate, more sympathetic understanding for the life of nature and the soul.

It was the end of the eighties before creative spirits appeared among these "Youngest Germans." The founders of the naturalistic drama were Arno Holz (born 1863) and Johannes Schlaf (born 1862). *Familiæ Selicke*¹ (1890), written jointly by them, and *Meister Ölze*² (1892), by Schlaf, are perfect examples of naturalism in their minute presentation of conditions which are utterly dismal and hopeless. It was the influence of these two men and their plays which at first enveloped the far more important dramatist and poet, Gerhart Hauptmann (born 1862, a native of Silesia). Like Keller, Hauptmann at first intended to be an artist, but

Symbolism,
or Modern
Romanticism.

The First
Naturalistic
Dramas.

¹ *The Selicke Family.*

² *Master Ölze.*

by the middle of the eighties he had dabbled in natural science as well as in painting, he had also travelled in Spain and Italy, and he had settled in Berlin. Here he came into close touch with Holz and Schlaf and published his first notable works. Hauptmann's career is a striking illustration of the ebb and flow of naturalism and symbolism in the literature of recent years. The two dramas *Vor Sonnenaufgang*¹ (1889) and *Einsame Menschen*² (1891) are, with all their crudeness, startling pictures of human degeneracy and distress, in thorough accord with naturalistic principles; so, too, is *Die Weber*³ (1892), a dramatic presentation of an uprising of Silesian weavers, which was first written in dialect. In *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*⁴ (1892) the influence of Modern Romanticism begins to appear; beside the naturalistic squalor of an almshouse we see the ecstatic visions of a dying child. Hauptmann returned to unadulterated realism in *Der Biberpelz*⁵ (1893), a clever comedy on thieves' life, and in *Florian Geyer* (1895), an unsuccessful attempt to draw a large historical picture with naturalistic attention to detail. The author's disappointment at the failure of *Florian Geyer* is suggested in the symbolical drama *Die versunkene Glocke*⁶ (1896), the disappointment of the artist who cannot reconcile his aspirations with the standards of his fellow-men. Heinrich, a bell-founder, has finished a church bell which seems to him his greatest work; but as it is being taken to the church the cart is overturned by a mischievous faun, the bell is thrown into a lake, and Heinrich barely escapes with his life. While seeking help and refuge, he meets the elf Rautendelein, who lures him away from home and family far up into the mountains. Freed from the obliga-

Hauptmann
(born 1862).

"Die
versunkene
Glocke"
(1896).

¹ *Before Dawn.*

² *The Weavers.*

³ *The Beaver Coat.*

⁴ *Lonely People.*

⁵ *Hannele's Ascension to Heaven.*

⁶ *The Sunken Bell.*

tions and cares of his former life, he lives for his handicraft alone until the tones of the sunken bell rise up to him and call him back. But the world now casts him off, he has been untrue to its obligations, and thus he dies. *Die versunkene Glocke* is thus far Hauptmann's masterpiece. A poet of exquisite sensibilities, he gave free rein in this drama to that sympathetic warmth which is always more or less characteristic of him even in his naturalistic plays. No other drama of his contains so many beautiful lines, and no other has figures which are more clearly drawn than those of the faun, Nickelmännchen a water sprite, and Rautendelein. Despite the enormous immediate success of *Die versunkene Glocke*, Hauptmann again reverted to pure naturalism in *Fuhrmann Henschel*¹ (1898), the foremost product of the whole movement. During the last decade Hauptmann has published many plays, but apart from a greater mastery of technic, he has made no real advance; his originality and independence, his beauty of language and his imaginativeness, were already well attested by works we have mentioned. His best recent plays are *Der arme Heinrich*² (1902) a revival of the story by Hartmann von Aue, *Rose Bernd* (1903) a village tragedy on the theme of infanticide, and *Und Pippa tanzt*³ (1906), an obscure but charming expression of symbolism which to English readers suggests Browning's *Pippa Passes*.

With the exception of Hauptmann, the most conspicuous writer of the present generation is the East Prussian Hermann Sudermann. Born in 1857, Sudermann studied first in Königsberg, but in 1877 he entered the university in Berlin and soon after made the imperial capital his permanent home. Sudermann represents a modified form of naturalism. He is direct and realistic, but he is not microscopic like Schlaf. Suder-

Sudermann
(born 1857).

¹ *Teamster Henschel*.

² *Poor Henry*.

³ *And Pippa Dances*.

mann's fame was firmly established by his first, semi-autobiographical novel *Frau Sorge*¹ (1887), from an artistic standpoint the most finished story Sudermann has yet written. It describes the development of a self-sacrificing, often too submissive character into a strong, manly personality. Later stories by Sudermann, *Der Katzensteg*² (1889) and *Es War*³ (1894) particularly, have striking scenes and figures, but they lack the artistic proportion of his earlier work. Sudermann's career in the drama has been a repetition of his experience as a novelist. *Die Ehre*⁴ (1890), a masterly comparison of the ideas of "honor" held by the family of a factory owner and that of one of his employees, was the first of the serious, semi-naturalistic dramas which one now sees most frequently on the German stage. It was followed by *Sodoms Ende*⁵ (1891), a play of better construction, but less successful with the public. The fame of *Die Ehre* and *Sodoms Ende* has, however, been limited to Germany, whereas *Heimat*⁶ (1893) has been translated into many languages, and, under the title of *Magda*, has furnished one of the leading rôles of the world's most famous actresses. Since the appearance of *Heimat* Sudermann has written many more plays, *Das Glück im Winkel*⁷ (1896), *Johannes*⁸ (1898), *Die drei Reiherfedern*⁹ (1898) a symbolistic drama, *Johannisfeuer*¹⁰ (1900), *Es lebe das Leben*¹¹ (1902), *Stein unter Steinen*¹² (1905), and others, but he has never surpassed the artistic construction and effectiveness of his earlier plays. He has had the greatest stage success of any contemporary dramatist, but his plays lack the psychological depth and truth of great art.

¹ *Dame Care*, cf. above page 217.

³ *Once on a Time*.

⁵ *Sodom's End*.

⁷ *Love in a Nook*.

⁹ *The Three Heron Feathers*.

¹¹ *The Joy of Living*.

² A name, "The Cat's Bridge."

⁴ *Honor*.

⁶ *Home*.

⁸ *John the Baptist*.

¹⁰ *The Fires of St. John*.

¹² *A Stone between Stones*.

Another East Prussian, who is also a clever playwright, is Max Halbe (born 1865). *Jugend*¹ (1893) and *Mutter Erde*² (1897) are Halbe's most effective dramas; both are naturalistic pictures of life in the author's home country. Ludwig Fulda (born 1862) first made a reputation for himself with *Das verlorene Paradies*³ (1890) and *Die Sklavin*⁴ (1891). He was afterward still more successful when he turned from his former semi-naturalism and wrote the symbolical drama *Der Talisman*⁵ (1892); but, like Halbe, Fulda is chiefly an artist in technic, and his plays are ephemeral in content and aim. *Liebelei*⁶ (1895), the leading drama of Arthur Schnitzler (born 1862 in Vienna), combines naturalistic tendencies in method with the sentimentality and the joy in life which are characteristic of Schnitzler's birthplace.

The weirdest, most extravagant examples of symbolism which lyric poetry has produced are to be found among the poems of Richard Dehmel (born 1863); feeling and imagination here become chaotic and uncanny, but Dehmel has also written exquisite poems, for example, *Manche Nacht*,⁷ *Die stille Stadt*,⁸ and *Der Stieglitz*.⁹ Stefan George (born 1868) has an aristocratic aversion to real life and thus forms an extreme contrast with the naturalists. In *Das Jahr der Seele*¹⁰ (1897), *Der Teppich des Lebens*¹¹ (1900), and other collections of poems, he aims at musical, harmonious beauty, and at times he achieves wonderful effects. He like Mörike can render the inexpressible in language of mysterious, subtle charm, but George's lack of appreciation for popular life and the frequent obscurity of his poetry will always limit

Minor
Dramatists.

Poets of
Symbolism.

¹ *Youth.*

² *Paradise Lost.*

³ *The Talisman.*

⁷ *Many a Night.*

⁹ *The Goldfinch.*

¹¹ *The Carpet of Life.*

² *Mother Earth.*

⁴ *The Woman Slave.*

⁶ *Light o' Love.*

⁸ *The Silent City.*

¹⁰ *The Soul's Calendar.*

his audience to very small, æsthetic circles. Hugo von Hofmannsthal (born 1874) uses the form of the drama for the most part, but his works are so distinctly lyrical in tone that he may be classed here with Dehmel and George. He has indeed been deeply influenced by George, especially in his attitude toward real life, but he is less obscure. His most poetic, thoughtful plays are *Die Hochzeit der Sobeide*¹ (1899) and *Der Tor und der Tod*² (1900). In the last years Hofmannsthal has been borrowing from Sophocles, *Elektra* (1903) and *Ödipus* (1905), but almost the sole beauty of these plays is their melodious language; both of them are excessively grewsome and morbid.

Recent years have brought forward several poets who have not been affected by naturalism and Modern Romanticism or who were drawn into these eddies

Other,
Independent,
Poets.

only for a brief season. Of these Spitteler and Liliencron stand in the front rank. The poems of Karl Spitteler (born 1845) often have a defiant individuality, and perhaps for this reason they have found

little appreciation. His most famous works are the epic *Olympischer Frühling*³ (1900-4) and the collections of poems *Schmetterlinge*⁴ (1889), *Literarische Gleichnisse*⁵ (1892), and *Balladen*⁶ (1896); their strength and restrained passion remind us of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. Detlev von Liliencron (1846-

Liliencron
(1846-1909).

1909), once an officer in the Prussian army, first displayed his literary talents in the poems *Adjutant-enritte*⁷ (1884) and in the group of short stories *Kriegs-novellen*⁸ (1893), both of which are echoes of his part in the war against France. The youthful spirit and dash of his poems, particularly of various ballads, made Liliencron

¹ *The Marriage of Sobeide.*

² *Olympian Springtime.*

³ *Literary Parables.*

⁴ *An Adjutant's Rides.*

⁵ *Death and the Fool.*

⁶ *Butterflies.*

⁷ *Ballads.*

⁸ *War Tales.*

the favorite modern poet of many Germans. Gustav Falke (born 1853) does not equal Liliencron in vigor, but he is superior to him in tenderness of feeling. Falke's chief poems are to be found in the volumes *Tanz und Andacht*¹ (1893) and *Neue Fahrt*² (1897). The melancholy of Heine reappears in the early poems of Prince Emil von Schönaich-Carolath (1852-1908), but there is independent art and a hopeful conception of life in Schönaich's later verse, especially in *Dichtungen*³ (1883). Besides many poems reflecting moods in nature Ferdinand Avenarius (born 1856) has written a very touching poem *Lebe!*⁴ (1893), in which he tells the ultimate triumph of a stricken soul. Heinrich Vierordt (born 1855), a man of fine culture, has succeeded in a number of lyrics and vigorous, vivid ballads. Of the younger independent poets the most gifted are Karl Busse (born 1872) and Börries von Münchhausen (born 1874); the former is chiefly a lyric poet, while the latter has done his best work thus far in the ballad.

Karl Bleibtreu (born 1859), Max Kretzer (born 1854), and other exponents of unadulterated naturalism as expressed in stories in prose have produced nothing of unquestionable merit; *Meister Timpe*⁵ (1888) by Kretzer and *Ingenieur Horstmann*⁶ (1900) by Wilhelm Hegeler (born 1870) are among the most famous novels of this kind. Naturalism in a modified form, that is, freed from the doctrines of the microscopic and the brutal, has been employed with signal success by several authors. Thus Wilhelm von Polenz (born 1861 in Saxony, died 1903) pressed forward to genuine artistic realism in a series of remarkably mature novels, *Der Pfarrer von Breitendorf*⁷ (1893), *Der Büttnerbauer*⁸ (1895), and *Der*

Semi-
Naturalistic
Novels.

¹ *Revels and Reveries.*

² *Poems.*

³ *Master Timpe.*

⁴ *The Pastor of Breitendorf.*

⁵ *A New Excursion.*

⁶ *Live!*

⁷ *Engineer Horstmann.*

⁸ *Farmer Büttner.*

*Grabenhäger*¹ (1897), all three of which are stories of life in Saxony, and *Thekla Lüdekind* (1899). Polenz is pre-eminent among the many recent novelists and story-writers who have dealt with the popular life of their native provinces. Other representatives of this type of literature are the following: from Schleswig-Holstein, Gustav Frenssen (born 1863), the author of the enormously successful *Jörn Uhl* (1901), Adolf Bartels (born 1862): *Die Ditmarscher*² (1898), and Otto Ernst (born 1862): *Asmus Sempers Jugendland*³ (1904); from Saxony, Heinrich Sohnrey (born 1859): *Die Leute aus der Lindenhütte*⁴ (1886); from the Rhine country, Joseph Lauff (born 1855): *Kärrekiek* (1902), and Rudolf Herzog (born 1869): *Die Wiskottens* (1905); from Baden, Heinrich Hansjakob (born 1837): *Valentin der Nagler*;⁵ and from Switzerland, Ernst Zahn (born 1867): *Die Clari-Mari* (1904) and *Lukas Hochstrassers Haus*⁶ (1907).

Thomas Mann (born 1875 in Lübeck) is a master of the novel; his *Buddenbrooks* (1901) presents with graphic, truthful detail the decline of a Lübeck patrician family. *Zwei Seelen*⁷ (1904) by Wilhelm Speck (born 1861) is a very touching story of an obscure human fate. Speck has also written short stories, such as those in the collection *Menschen, die den Weg verloren*⁸ (1906), which remind us of Stifter in their simple, clear beauty. Georg von Ompteda (born 1862) has written much that is commonplace, but *Sylvester von Geyer* (1897) and *Eysen*⁹ are notable novels. Hermann Hesse (born

Other
Conspicuous
Novelists.

¹ *The Squire of Grabenhagen.*

² *People of Ditmarsh*, a district in Holstein.

³ *Asmus Semper, The Story of a Boyhood.*

⁴ *The People from the Linden Cottage.*

⁵ *Valentine the Nailmaker.*

⁶ *Lucas Hochstrasser's Family.*

⁷ *Two Souls.*

⁸ *People Who Have Lost Their Way.*

⁹ A name, "Iron."

1877) is worthy of mention on account of his *Peter Camenzind* (1904), a story of great lyrical charm. Two other recent novels of unusual narrative merit are *Jettchen Gebert* (1906) by Georg Hermann (born 1871) and *Der Wirt von Veladuz*¹ (1907) by Georg Hirschfeld (born 1873).

Besides Ebner-Eschenbach, there are several well-known women novelists in Germany. Isolde Kurz (born 1853) has written some beautiful lyrics and several artistic short stories, the latter of which are contained in the volumes entitled *Florentiner Novellen*² (1890) and *Italienische Erzählungen*³ (1895). Ricarda Huch (born 1867) established her reputation with the poetic novel *Erinnerungen von Ludolf Ursleu*⁴ (1893), which shows the influence of Romanticism and Keller, and yet has striking originality. Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti (born 1871) is the author of a thrilling story of the sixteenth century, *Jesse und Maria* (1906). Clara Viebig (born 1860) has written many ultra-modern, erotic stories of little value, but she has also written vivid short stories in the collection *Kinder der Eifel*⁵ (1897) and novels such as *Das tägliche Brot*⁶ (1900) and *Das schlafende Heer*⁷ (1904), which show fine powers of observation. The works of Helene Böhlau (born 1859) also vary greatly; her *Ratsmädchengeschichten*⁸ (1888-97) are very amusing stories, and her novel *Der Rangierbahnhof*⁹ (1895) is a story of deep and broad significance.

The works which have been mentioned in this chapter, and many other books of recent years, afford illustration of the most striking characteristic of contemporary Ger-

¹ *The Landlord of Veladuz.*

² *Florentine Tales.*

³ *Italian Stories.*

⁴ *Reminiscences of Ludolf Ursleu.*

⁵ *Children of the Eifel*, a range of hills south-west of Cologne.

⁶ *Daily Bread.*

⁷ *The Slumbering Hosts.*

⁸ *Stories of a Councilman's Daughters.*

⁹ *The Shunting Station.*

man literature, a spirit of serious endeavor. One who reads the current German novels and plays is impressed again and again by the earnestness with which writers of the present time are striving to understand life and to present it in an artistic form. Hardly a phase of human existence and experience, however remote from ordinary life, however mean and sordid, is without an earnest student and spokesman. In matters of form something definite and tangible has already been accomplished. The construction of the German drama and novel has become much simpler and more compact. German style is far clearer, more smooth, and more flexible. The day of the perplexing, infinite German sentence is passing, if it has not gone. Granting the difficulty of forecasting life and therefore of foretelling the character of a literature which gives expression to life, the present German combination of a high artistic standard and honest endeavor warrants the expectation that in the approaching years German literature will be enriched by works of great and permanent value.





A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

PRE-CHRISTIAN AGE AND OLD HIGH GERMAN PERIOD (TO 1100)

A. D.

- 9. Hermann, the leader of the Cherusicans, defeats Varus and his Roman legions.
- 374-568. Migrations of the Races. Birth of the Heroic Sagas.
- 550-750. Introduction of Christianity, and Organization of the Church in Germany.
- By 700. *Merseburger Zaubersprüche* and *Hildebrandslied*.
- 789. Charlemagne's Regulations concerning Preaching and Church Instruction. Translations into German of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and Homilies.
- ca.800. *Wessobrunner Gebet*.
- ca.830. *Heliand*.
- ca.868. Otfrid, *Evangelienbuch*.
- ca.881. *Ludwigslied*.
- ca.930. *Waltharilied*.
- ca.940. *Ecbasis Captivi*.
- ca.1000. Notker's Translation of the Psalms and of Boëthius.
- ca.1030. *Ruodlieb*.
- ca.1080. *Annoilied*.
- 1096. First Crusade.

MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN PERIOD (1100-1500)

- ca.1130. *Alexanderlied*. *Rolandslied*.
- ca.1140. *König Rother*.
- ca.1150. *Kaiserchronik*. Birth of Minnesong.
- ca.1160. *Ludus de Antichristo*.
- ca.1180. *Herzog Ernst*. Eilhart, *Tristrant*. *Reinhart Fuchs*. Hergêr died.
- By 1188. Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneit*.
- 1192. Hartmann von Aue, *Erec*.
- ca.1200. *Nibelungenlied*. Hartmann, *Iwein*.
- ca.1200-10. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*.
- ca.1210. Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*.
- ca.1210-20. *Gudrun*.
- ca.1215. Hartmann died.

- ca. 1220. Wolfram died. *Der ielsche Gast. Der Winsboc.*
 ca. 1230. Walther von der Vogelweide died. *Freidank, Be-scheidenheit. Sachsenspiegel.*
 ca. 1245. Neidhart von Rouenthal died.
 ca. 1250. *Heimbrecht. Sächsische Weltchronik.*
 1254. Rudolf von Ems died.
 1255. Lichtenstein. *Frauenkienst.*
 1272. Berthold von Regensburg died.
 1287. Konrad von Würzburg died.
 ca. 1300. Large Heidelberg (Manesse) Manuscript of Minne-songs compiled. Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner.*
 1318. Heinrich von Meissen. "Frauenlob," died.
 1322. *Spiel von den klugen und toichten Jungfrauen* per-formed at Eisenach.
 1327. Master Eckhart, the mystic, died.
 ca. 1340. Boner. *Edelstein. Deutscherleichenchronik.*
 1348. First German University established at Prague.
 1421. *Thüringische Chronik.*
 1445. Oswald von Wolkenstein, the last of the minnesingers, died.
 ca. 1450. Gutenberg invented Printing. First accredited School of Mastersingers founded at Augsburg.
 1483. Chap-book *Eulenspiegel.*
 1492. Discovery of America.
 1494. Brant, *Das Narrenschiff.*
 1498. *Reinke de Vos.*

NEW HIGH GERMAN PERIOD (1500 TO THE PRESENT)

1512. Murner, *Narrenbeschrörung.*
 1515. *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* (—1517).
 1517. Luther posts his theses against the sale of indulgences. *Teuerdank* printed.
 1521. Luther before the Diet at Worms.
 1522. Luther's *Translation of the New Testament.* Murner, *Von dem grossen lutherischen Narren.* Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst.*
 1523. Hutten died. Sachs, *Die Wittenbergische Nachtigall.*
 1524. First Lutheran Hymn-book. Sachs, *Gespräche.*
 1527. Waldis, *Der verlorene Sohn.*
 1534. Luther's *Complete Translation of the Bible.*
 1535. Reithun, *Susanna.* Chap-books *Kaiser Octavianus, Die vier Haimonskinder.*
 1536. Erasmus of Rotterdam died. Chap-book *Magelone.*
 1546. Luther died.
 1548. Waldis, *Esopus.*

- 1555. Wickram, *Rollwagenbüchlein*.
- 1557. Sachs, *Der hürnen Seufried*. Wickram, *Der Goldfaden*.
- 1560. Melanchthon died.
- 1569. *Amadis aus Frankreich* (—1594).
- 1572. Fischart, *Aller Praktik Grossmutter*.
- 1575. Fischart, *Gargantua*.
- 1576. Fischart, *Das glückhafte Schiff*.
- 1578. Fischart, *Ehezuchtbüchlein*.
- 1580. Fischart, *Hütlein*.
- 1587. Chap-book *Dr. Faust*.
- ca. 1590. English Comedians appear in Germany.
- 1595. Rollenhagen, *Froschmeuseler*.
- 1597. Chap-book *Die Schildebürger*.
- 1616. Shakespeare died.
- 1617. The first language association, *Die Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, established in Weimar.
- 1618. Beginning of the Thirty Years' War.
- 1624. Opitz, *Von der deutschen Poeterei*.
- 1645. Moscherosch, *Gesichte Philanders von Sittewald*. Zesen, *Die Adriatische Rosemund*.
- 1649. Spee, *Trutznachtigall*. Charles I, of England, beheaded.
- 1657. Gryphius, *Karolus Stuardus*. Scheffler, *Heilige Seelenlust* and *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*.
- 1660. Gryphius, *Das verliebte Gespenst* and *Die geliebte Dornrose*.
- 1663. Gryphius, *Horribilicribrifax*.
- 1668. Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*.
- 1672. Weise, *Die drei ärgsten Erznarren in der ganzen Welt*.
- 1676. Grimmelshausen died.
- 1687. First university lectures in German delivered by Thomasius in Leipsic.
- 1689. Lohenstein, *Arminius* (—1690).
- 1696. C. Reuter, *Schelmuffsky*.
- 1716. Leibniz died.
- 1719. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*.
- 1721. *Discourse der Maler* established. Brockes, *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*.
- 1724. Günther's Poems. Gottsched settles in Leipsic.
- 1730. Gottsched, *Kritische Dichtkunst*. Thomson, *The Seasons*.
- 1731. *Die Insel Felsenburg* (—1743).
- 1732. Gottsched, *Der sterbende Cato*. Haller, *Die Alpen*. Bodmer's Translation of *Paradise Lost*.
- 1740. Accession of Frederick the Great as King of Prussia. Breitinger, *Kritische Dichtkunst*. Richardson, *Pamela*.

1744. *Bremer Beiträge* established. Zachariä, *Der Renommiste*.
1746. Gellert, *Fabeln und Erzählungen* and *Die schwedische Gräfin*.
1748. Klopstock, first three cantos of the *Messias*. Bodmer, specimens of minnesong. Lessing, *Der junge Gelehrte*.
1754. Lessing, *Rettungen des Horaz* and *Vademecum für Herrn Samuel Gotthold Lange*.
1755. Lessing, *Miss Sara Sampson*.
1756. Beginning of the Seven Years' War. Gessner, *Idyllen*.
1757. Gellert, Hymns. Klopstock, *Der Tod Adams*. E. von Kleist, *An die preussische Armee*.
1758. Gleim, *Preussische Kriegslieder*. Gessner, *Der Tod Abels*.
1759. Lessing, *Literaturbriefe* and *Philotas*.
1761. Abbt, *Vom Tode fürs Vaterland*.
1762. Wieland's Translation of Shakespeare (—1766).
1764. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*.
1766. Lessing, *Laokoon*. Herder, *Fragmente* (—1767). Wieland, *Agathon* (—1767). Gerstenberg, *Gedicht eines Skalden*.
1767. Lessing, *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (—1769).
1768. Lessing, *Briefe antiquarischen Inhalts* (—1769). Wieland, *Musarion*. Gerstenberg, *Ugolino*. Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* translated by Bode (—1769). Ossian translated by Denis (—1769).
1769. Lessing, *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet*. Herder, *Kritische Wälder*. Klopstock, *Hermanns Schlacht*.
1770. *Musenalmanach* (—1800).
1771. Lessing, *Anmerkungen über das Epigramm*. Klopstock, Collected Odes first published.
1772. Lessing, *Emilia Galotti*. Wieland, *Der goldene Spiegel*. *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* under Merck's direction, with Herder and Goethe as contributors. Göttingen Hainbund established.
1773. Klopstock, conclusion of *Messias*. *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*. Goethe, *Götz*. Bürger, *Lenore*. *Der teutsche Merkur* (—1810).
1774. Goethe, *Werther* and *Clavigo*. Lessing, *Wolfenbüttler Fragmente* (—1778). Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte und Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts* (—1776). Klopstock, *Die deutsche Gelehrtenrepublik*. Wieland, *Die Abderiten* (—1781). Lenz, *Der Hofmeister*.

1776. American Declaration of Independence. Klinger, *Sturm und Drang*. Lenz, *Die Soldaten*. Leisewitz, *Julius von Tarent*. Miller, *Siegwart*.
1777. Wieland, *Geron der Adlige*. Jung-Stilling, *Heinrich Stillings Jugend*.
1778. Herder, *Volkslieder* (—1779). Lessing, *Anti-Goeze*. Hippel, *Lebensläufe nach aufsteigender Linie*.
1779. Lessing, *Nathan der Weise*.
1780. Frederick the Great, *De la littérature allemande*. Lessing, *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechtes*. Wieland, *Oberon*.
1781. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Voss, *Der siebenzigste Geburtstag* and Translation of the *Odyssey*. Schiller, *Die Räuber*.
1782. Herder, *Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie* (—1783). Voss, *Luise* (—1784, 1795). Musäus, *Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (—1786).
1783. Schiller, *Fiesco*.
1784. Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (—1791). Klopstock, *Hermann und die Fürsten*. Schiller, *Kabale und Liebe*.
1786. Death of Frederick the Great. Schubart, *Friedrich der Grosse*. Bürger, *Münchhausens wunderbare Reisen*. *Die Thalia* (—1791). J. v. Müller, *Geschichte der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft* (—1808).
1787. Goethe, *Iphigenie*. Schiller, *Don Carlos*. Klopstock, *Hermanns Tod*.
1788. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. Goethe, *Egmont*. Schiller, *Der Abfall der vereinigten Niederlande* and *Die Götter Griechenlands*.
1789. Washington became President of the United States. Beginning of the French Revolution. Kotzebue, *Menschenhass und Reue*.
1790. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilstkraft*. Goethe, *Faust, ein Fragment* and *Tasso*. Forster, *Ansichten vom Niederrhein*.
1791. Schiller, *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges* (—1793). Iffland, *Die Hagestolzen*.
1793. Schiller, *Über Anmut und Würde*. Voss, Translation of the *Iliad*. Jean Paul, *Die unsichtbare Loge*.
1794. Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre*.
1795. Goethe, *Römische Elegien*. Schiller, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*. *Die Horen* (—1798.) Jean Paul, *Hesperus*. F. A. Wolf, *Prolegomena ad Homerum*. Tieck, *Geschichte des Herrn William Lovell*.

1796. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Jean Paul, *Siebenkäs* (—1797).
1797. Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*. Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (—1799). Tieck, *Der gestiefelte Kater*. Tieck and Wackenroder, *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*. "Schlegel-Tieck Shakespeare" begins to appear.
1798. Tieck, *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*. *Athenäum* (—1800).
1799. Schiller, *Wallenstein and Lied von der Glocke*. Tieck, *Genoveva*. F. Schlegel, *Lucinde*.
1800. Schiller, *Maria Stuart*. Jean Paul, *Titan* (—1803).
1801. Schiller, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*.
1802. Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. H. von Kleist, *Die Familie Schroffenstein*.
1803. Goethe, *Die natürliche Tochter*. Schiller, *Die Braut von Messina*. Hebel, *Alemannische Gedichte*. Kotzebue, *Die deutschen Kleinstädter*. Tieck, Edition of *Minnelieder aus dem schwäbischen Zeitalter*.
1804. Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell* and *Die Huldigung der Künste*. Jean Paul, *Flegeljahre* (—1805) and *Vorschule der Ästhetik*. Tieck, *Kaiser Octavianus*.
1805. Schiller died. Goethe, *Epilog zu Schillers Glocke* and *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert*. Herder, *Der Cid*.
1806. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (—1808). Arndt, *Der Geist der Zeit* (—1818).
1807. Jean Paul, *Levana*. Fichte lectures in Berlin 1807–1808, *Reden an die deutsche Nation*. Görres, *Die deutschen Volksbücher*.
1808. Goethe, *Faust. Erster Teil* and *Pandora*. A. von Humboldt, *Ansichten der Natur*. A. W. Schlegel lectures in Vienna (1808–09), *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*. F. Schlegel, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*. H. von Kleist, *Penthesilea* and *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*.
1809. Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*.
1810. Goethe, *Zur Farbenlehre*. Von der Hagen, Edition of the *Nibelungenlied*. H. von Kleist, *Michael Kohlhaas*. Jahn, *Deutsches Volksthum*.
1811. Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (—1814, 1833). Hebel, *Schatzkästlein des rheinischen Hausfreundes*. Niebuhr, *Römische Geschichte* (—1832).
1812. Tieck, *Phantásus* (—1816). Grimm Brothers, *Deutsche Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (—1815). Müllner, *Der 29. Februar*.

1813. Battle of Leipsic. Defeat of Napoleon.
1814. Goethe, *Des Epimenides Erwachen*. Körner, *Leier und Schwert*. Rückert, *Deutsche Gedichte*. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Phantasiestücke* (—1815). Chamisso, *Peter Schlemihl*. Scott, *Waverley*.
1815. Battle of Waterloo. Werner, *Der 24. Februar*. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Die Eliziere des Teufels* (—1816). Poems by Uhland.
1816. Goethe, *Italienische Reise* (—1817). Müllner, *Die Schuld*.
1817. Arnim, *Die Kronenwächter*. Uhland, *Ernst, Herzog von Schwaben*. Grillparzer, *Die Ahnfrau*.
1818. Goethe, *Festzug*.
1819. Goethe, *Der Westöstliche Divan*. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Die Serapionsbrüder* (—1821). Uhland, *Ludwig der Bayer*. Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Grammatik* (—1837). Grillparzer, *Sappho*.
1821. H. von Kleist, *Die Hermannsschlacht* and *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*. E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* (—1822).
1822. Uhland, *Das Leben Walthers von der Vogelweide*. Rückert, *Östliche Rosen* and *Liebesfrühling*. Grillparzer, *Das goldene Vliess*. Grabbe, *Scherz, Satire, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung*. Heine, *Gedichte* (i. e., *Junge Leiden*).
1825. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (—1829). Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter* (—1826). Grillparzer, *König Ottokars Glück und Ende*.
1826. Heine, *Reisebilder* (—1831). Platen, *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel*. Eichendorff, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*. Hauff, *Lichtenstein*.
1827. Heine, *Buch der Lieder*. Hauff, *Phantasien im Bremer Ratskeller*. Koberstein, *Grundriss zur Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*.
1828. Raimund, *Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind*. Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*.
1829. Platen, *Der romantische Ödipus*. Grabbe, *Don Juan* and *Faust* and *Friedrich Barbarossa*. Wilhelm Grimm, *Die deutsche Heldensage*.
1830. Grillparzer, *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn*. Grün, *Der letzte Ritter*. Börne, *Briefe aus Paris* (—1833).
1831. Grillparzer, *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*. Grabbe, *Napoleon*. Grün, *Spaziergänge eines Wiener Poeten*.

1832. Goethe died. Goethe, *Faust. Zweiter Teil*. Alexis, *Cabanis*. Immermann, *Merlin*. Mörike, *Malen Nolten*.
1833. Heine, *Französische Zustände*. Raimund, *Der Verschwender*.
1834. Grillparzer, *Der Traum, ein Leben*. Laube, *Reisenovellen*. Halm, *Griseldis*. Ranke, *Die römischen Päpste des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*.
1835. Bettina von Arnim, *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*. Heine, *Der Salon* (—1840). Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*. Gutzkow, *Wally die Zweiflerin*. Bauernfeld, *Bürgerlich und Romantisch*. Simrock, *Wieland der Schmied*. Gervinus, *Geschichte der Deutschen Dichtung* (—1842).
1836. Heine, *Die Romantische Schule*. Rückert, *Weisheit des Brahmanen*. Immermann, *Die Epigonen*. Lenau, *Faust*.
1838. Grillparzer, *Weh dem, der lügt*. Poems by Mörike. Immermann, *Münchhausen*. Gotthelf, *Leiden und Freuden eines Schulmeisters*.
1840. Tieck, *Vittoria Accorombona*. Alexis, *Der Roland von Berlin*. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, *Unpolitische Lieder* (—1841). Schneckenburger, *Die Wacht am Rhein*. Heibel, *Judith*.
1841. Heibel, *Genoveva*. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*. Gotthelf, *Uli der Knecht*. Herwegh, *Gedichte eines Lebendigen*. Benedix, *Das bemooste Haupt*.
1842. Halm, *Der Sohn der Wildnis*. Dingelstedt, *Lieder eines kosmopolitischen Nachtwächters*.
1843. Heibel, *Maria Magdalene*. H. Kurz, *Schillers Heimatsjahre*. Auerbach, *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten* (—1854). Kinkel, *Otto der Schütz*.
1844. Uhland, *Alte hoch- und niederdeutsche Volkslieder* (—1845). Heine, *Deutschland and Neue Gedichte*. Gutzkow, *Zopf und Schwert*. Stifter, *Studien* (—1850).
1845. A. von Humboldt, *Kosmos* (—1858). Wagner, *Tannhäuser*. Vilmar, *Geschichte der poetischen Nationalliteratur der Deutschen*.
1846. Alexis, *Die Hosen des Herrn von Bredow* (—1848). Gotthelf, *Uli der Pächter*. Bauernfeld, *Grossjährig*.
1847. Heine, *Atta Troll*. Gutzkow, *Uriel Acosta*. Laube, *Die Karlsschüler*.

1848. Hebbel, *Herodes und Mariamne*. Freiligrath, *Die Toten an die Lebenden*. Geibel, *Juniuslieder*.
1849. Freiligrath, *Neuere politische und sociale Gedichte* (—1851).
1850. Gutzkow, *Ritter vom Geiste* (—1852). Ludwig, *Der Erbförster*. Wagner, *Lohengrin*.
1851. Heine, *Romanzero*. Hebbel, *Agnes Bernauer*. Bodenstedt, *Lieder des Mirza Schaffy*. Roquette, *Waldmeisters Brautfahrt*.
1852. Alexis, *Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*. Ludwig, *Die Makkabäer*. Storm's first story, *Immensee*. Groth, *Quickborn*.
1853. Heine, *Letzte Gedichte* (—1855). Scheffel, *Der Trompeter von Säckingen*. Freytag, *Die Journalisten*.
1854. Heine, *Lutetia*. Alexis, *Isegrimm*. Halm, *Der Fechter von Ravenna*. Hebbel, *Gyges und sein Ring*. Heyse's first story, *L'Arrabbiata*. Keller, *Der grüne Heinrich* (—1855, 1879–80). Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*.
1855. Ludwig, *Die Heiterethei*. Scheffel, *Ekkehard*. Freytag, *Soll und Haben*. H. Kurz, *Der Sonnenwirt*.
1856. Laube, *Graf Essex*. Ludwig, *Zwischen Himmel und Erde*. Keller, *Die Leute von Seldwyla*, first volume. Raabe, *Die Chronik der Sperlingsgasse*. Riehl, *Kulturgeschichtliche Novellen*. Hettner, *Literaturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (—1870).
1857. Hebbel, *Mutter und Kind*. Geibel, *Neue Gedichte*. Gerok, *Palmblätter*.
1858. Gutzkow, *Der Zauberer von Rom* (—1861). F. Reuter, *Kein Hüsung*.
1859. Freytag, *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit* (—1862).
1860. F. Reuter, *Olle Kamellen* (—1864). Herman Grimm, *Michel Angelo* (—1863). Burckhardt, *Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*.
1861. Beginning of the American Civil War. Hebbel, *Die Nibelungen*.
1862. Spielhagen, *Problematische Naturen*. Fontane, *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* (—1882).
1863. Raabe, *Die Leute aus dem Walde*. Hertz, *Hugdietrichs Brautfahrt*.
1864. Geibel, *Gedichte und Gedenkblätter*. Freytag, *Die verlorene Handschrift*. Raabe, *Der Hungerpastor*. Ebers, *Eine ägyptische Königstochter*.
1865. Laube, *Der deutsche Krieg* (—1866). Auerbach, *Auf der Höhe*. Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*.

1866. War between Austria and Prussia. F. Reuter, *Dörchlöuchting*. Hamerling, *Ahasver in Rom*. Spielhagen, *In Reih' und Glied*. Justi, *Winckelmann* (—1872).
1867. Raabe, *Abu Telfan*.
1868. Laube, *Das Burgtheater*. Poems by Greif. Jensen's first stories, including *Die braune Erica*. Wagner, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.
1869. Spielhagen, *Hammer und Amboss*. Hamerling, *Der König von Sion*. Auerbach, *Das Landhaus am Rhein*. Jordan, *Die Nibelunge* (—1874).
1870. Franco-German War (—1871). Raabe, *Der Schüdderump*. Anzengruber, *Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld*.
1871. Establishment of the present German Empire. Geibel, *Heroldsrufe*. François, *Die letzte Reckenburgerin*.
1872. Freytag, *Die Ahnen*. Anzengruber, *Die Kreuzelschreiber* and *Der Meineidbauer*.
1873. Heyse, *Kinder der Welt*. Rosegger, *Waldheimat*.
1874. Anzengruber, *Der G'wissenswurm*.
1875. Heyse, *Im Paradiese*. Rosegger, *Die Schriften des Waldschulmeisters*.
1876. Wagner, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Storm, *Aquis submersus*. Spielhagen, *Sturmflut*. Anzengruber, *Der Doppelselbstmord*. Meyer, *Jürg Jenatsch*. Ebner-Eschenbach, *Božena*. Dahn, *Ein Kampf um Rom*.
1877. Geibel, *Spätherbstblätter*. Baumbach, *Zlatorog*. Wolff, *Der wilde Jäger*. Saar, *Novellen aus Österreich* (—1897). Haym, *Herder* (—1885).
1878. Keller, *Züricher Novellen*. Anzengruber, *Das vierte Gebot*. Weber, *Dreizehnlinden*. Jensen, *Karin von Schweden*. Fontane, *Vor dem Sturm*. Ebers, *Homo Sum*.
1879. F. T. Vischer, *Auch einer*. Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert* (—1894).
1880. Meyer, *Der Heilige*. Fontane, *Grete Minde*. Stern, *Die letzten Humanisten*.
1881. Baumbach, *Frau Holde*. Steinhausen, *Irmela*.
1882. Meyer, *Das Sinngedicht*. Wildenbruch, *Die Karolinger* and *Der Mennonit*. Seidel, *Leberecht Hühnchen*. Wagner, *Parsifal*.
1883. Meyer, *Das Amulett*, *Gustav Adolfs Page*, and *Das Leiden eines Knaben*. Rosegger, *Der Gottsucher*. Schönaich-Carolath, *Dichtungen*. Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (—1892). Scherer, *Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*.

1884. Meyer, *Die Hochzeit des Mönchs*. Wildenbruch, *Christoph Marlow*. Liliencron, *Adjutantenritte*. Schmidt, *Lessing* (—1891).
1885. Meyer, *Die Richterin*. Stieler, *Winteridyll*.
1886. Keller, *Martin Salander*. Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch*. Sohnrey, *Die Leute aus der Lindenhütte*. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*.
1887. Meyer, *Die Versuchung des Pescara*. Ebner-Eschenbach, *Das Gemeindekind*. Sudermann, *Frau Sorge*.
1888. Storm, *Der Schimmelreiter*. Wildenbruch, *Die Quitzows*. Jensen, *Runensteine*. Fontane, *Irrungen Wirrungen*. Kretzer, *Meister Timpe*.
1889. Wildenbruch, *Der Generalfeldoberst*. Wilbrandt, *Der Meister von Palmyra*. Sudermann, *Der Katzensteg*. Hauptmann, *Vor Sonnenaufgang*. Spitteler, *Schmetterlinge*.
1890. Ebner-Eschenbach, *Unsühnbar*. Holz and Schlaf, *Familie Selicke*. Sudermann, *Die Ehre*. Fulda, *Das verlorene Paradies*. Isolde Kurz, *Florentiner Novellen*. Hans Hoffmann, *Der eiserne Rittmeister*.
1891. Wildenbruch, *Der neue Herr*. Hauptmann, *Einsame Menschen*. Sudermann, *Sodoms Ende*. Fulda, *Die Sklavin*.
1892. Fontane, *Frau Jenny Treibel*. Schlaf, *Meister Ölze*. Hauptmann, *Die Weber and Hanneles Himmelahrt*. Fulda, *Der Talisman*. Hans Hoffmann, *Landsturm*.
1893. Hauptmann, *Der Biberpelz*. Sudermann, *Heimat*. Wildenbruch, *Das edle Blut*. Liliencron, *Kriegs-novellen*. Falke, *Tanz und Andacht*. Polenz, *Der Pfarrer von Breitendorf*. Huch, *Erinnerungen von Ludolf Ursleu*. Halbe, *Jugend*.
1894. Sudermann, *Es War*. Fontane, *Meine Kinderjahre*.
1895. Fontane, *Effi Briest*. Hauptmann, *Florian Geyer*. Wilbrandt, *Die Osterinsel*. Schnitzler, *Liebelei*. Polenz, *Der Büttnerbauer*. Böhlau, *Der Rangierbahnhof*.
1896. Hauptmann, *Die versunkene Glocke*. Wildenbruch, *Heinrich und Heinrichs Geschlecht*. Sudermann, *Das Glück im Winkel*.
1897. Rosegger, *Das ewige Licht*. Halbe, *Mutter Erde*. George, *Das Jahr der Seele*. Falke, *Neue Fahrt*. Polenz, *Der Grabenhäger*. Ompteda, *Sylvester von Geyer*. Viebig, *Kinder der Eifel*.

1898. Fontane, *Der Stechlin*. Hauptmann, *Fuhrmann Henschel*. Sudermann, *Johannes* and *Die drei Reiterfedern*. Bartels, *Die Ditmarscher*. Nietzsche, *Gedichte und Sprüche*.
1899. Polenz, *Thekla Lüdekind*. Hofmannsthal, *Theater in Versen*. Steinhausen, *Heinrich Zwiesels Angste*.
1900. Sudermann, *Johannisfeuer*. George, *Der Teppich des Lebens*. Hofmannsthal, *Der Tor und der Tod*. Spitteler, *Olympischer Frühling* (—1904). Hegeler, *Ingenieur Horstmann*. Viebig, *Das tägliche Brot*.
1901. Frenssen, *Jörn Uhl*. Mann, *Buddenbrooks*.
1902. Hauptmann, *Der arme Heinrich*. Sudermann, *Es lebe das Leben*.
1903. Hauptmann, *Rose Bernd*. Hofmannsthal, *Elektra*.
1904. Viebig, *Das schlafende Heer*. Hesse, *Peter Camenzind*. Speck, *Zwei Seelen*. Zahn, *Die Clari-Mari*.
1905. Sudermann, *Stein unter Steinen*. Hofmannsthal, *Ödipus*. Herzog, *Die Wiskottens*.
1906. Hauptmann, *Und Pippa tanzt*. Speck, *Menschen die den Weg verloren*.

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